

# **THE RIDDLE OF MAN**

**FROM THE THINKING, OBSERVATIONS,  
AND CONTEMPLATIONS OF A SERIES OF  
GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN  
PERSONALITIES: WHAT THEY HAVE SAID  
AND LEFT UNSAID**

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## **Translator's Introduction**

This book portrays a struggle to develop a new sense for what man is. In clear, pictorial language it speaks to the heart about the riddles of existence. The German and Austrian idealists whose many voices we hear in it sought a deeper kind of thinking than that which can accept man as a mere machine. They tried to lift thinking to a seeing of what the deeper heart already knows about the immortality of the soul and its access to the sources of existence.

At a time when Germany is reuniting, it is important to look at Rudolf Steiner's picture of a central mission of the German folk spirit: to explore the human soul, to recognize that it exists above and beyond its reflection in the body, to implement its ability to wake up out of ordinary consciousness, and to realize the "I's" own free spiritual activity, which is both individualistic and in harmony with that of other people. Clearly these are themes transcending national boundaries and time periods.

Rudolf Steiner depicts not only the "thinking, observations, and contemplations" of famous people, but also, with warmth and enthusiasm, shows the profound discoveries of men forgotten or unrecognized during their lifetimes, many of them known to him personally. He wrote this book during World War I, with his "heart's blood," sometimes devoting two days to writing one sentence. Time would tell, he said, whether it

would also be as "badly read" as his previous books. An unusually personal quality imbues this book, as though Rudolf Steiner could not keep the deepest concerns of his heart from showing through.

The powerful ideas of the last chapter are like beings sent to wake us out of the disastrous mentality whose results were all around us in 1916. The impact of this chapter is far greater if the reader has taken the amazing journey (not meant for those seeking passive entertainment) of the preceding chapters, The German idealists' urgent quest for the spiritual world, often meeting with hatred or indifference, is dramatically vindicated there. The struggle of the higher individual to come through in us lives everywhere in this book, often expressed in striking and original terms, as in Jean Paul's question: "To what end and from where were these extraordinary potentials and wishes laid in us, which, bare as swallowed diamonds, slowly cut our earthly covering to pieces?"

## Foreword and Introduction

### Thought — World, Personality, Peoples

During these fateful times, in central European cities, I have had to give lectures based on some of the views developing in me for thirty-five years about the thought-worlds of a series of German and Austrian personalities. I wanted to speak about personalities in whose thoughts urgent life questions were striving for a solution, and in whose spiritual struggles the essential nature of the German people (*Volkheit*) also revealed itself. I would like to take what I expressed there as the leading thoughts for this book. This book is meant to speak about the striving of the human spirit for knowledge of its own being, in connection with seekers who pursued neither their own personal infatuations in knowledge nor arbitrary aesthetic inclinations, but rather thoughts that arise from an irresistible, healthy urge of human nature and are native to the heart's needs of a people, in spite of the spiritual heights toward which those seekers were striving. We will be speaking, to be sure, about personalities whose sense for the realities of life is often denied by those who do not want to acknowledge that the human being is confused and incapacitated by the surface of reality if he cannot confront it with understanding for the spirit holding sway in the depths. Thoughts struggling for a knowledge of the spirit are often repellent to that attitude of soul which is far too eager to cite Goethe in opposing such thoughts: "Gray, dear friend, is all

theory — and green the golden tree of life.” That attitude of soul disregards the fact that these words come from Goethe’s sense of humor and are put into the devil’s mouth as a teaching the devil considers good for a pupil of his.

It does not affect a life-sustaining thought to be called gray by a view catering to comfortableness in thinking; this view regards the grayness of its own theory as the golden radiance of the green tree of life.

\* \* \*

It goes against the feeling of many to speak about the effects of a people upon the world views of personalities who spring from this people. To do so, they believe, contradicts the obvious truth that knowledge of the true is a treasure of life possessed by all men in the same way. This is really just as valid for the highest thoughts of a world view as it is for the commonplace truth that two times two is four. But just because this is so obvious, one should not suppose without going further into the matter, that this obvious fact has been overlooked by someone seeking, within the being of the thinkers of a people, the roots of the people from which these thinkers stem. The human spirit, after all, lives not only in the abstract formation of certain concepts; it also draws its life from forces which souls, out of their most intimate experiences, allow to sound along with the insights born from

these experiences. Goethe felt this when he wrote to a friend: "To judge by the plants and fish I have seen in Naples and Sicily, I would, if I were ten years younger, be very tempted to make a trip to India, not in order to discover something new, but rather to contemplate in my own way what has already been discovered." Goethe in fact knows how something already discovered can be seen in a new light when it is regarded in a new way. And what humanity develops in the way of thoughts for its spiritual life about questions of knowledge speaks not only about *what* people are seeking, but also about *how* they seek. Someone receptive to such thoughts feels in them the soul pulse that heralds the life from which they shine into our reason. Just as it is true that in a thought one also learns to know its thinker, it is evident that in a thinker one can behold the people from which the thinker has arisen.

As to the content of truth dwelling in a thought and as to whether a mental picture (*Vorstellung*) has grown from the roots of genuine reality: these can certainly be determined only by powers of knowledge that are independent of place and time. Still, as to whether a particular thought, as to whether an idea leading the human spirit in a certain direction, arises within a certain people: this does depend upon the sources from which the spirit of this people can draw. Karl Rosenkranz certainly did not want to prove anything about the truth of Hegel's thought from the fact that he brought these



thoughts into connection with the German folk spirit, when in 1870 he wrote his book *Hegel as the German National Philosopher*. He held the view he had already expressed in his description of Hegel's life: "A true philosophy is the deed of a people ... But at the same time, for philosophy, insofar as it is philosophy, the particularities of its folk origins are of no importance at all. There, the universality and necessity of its content and the perfection of its proof are alone of significance. Whether the true is recognized and expressed by a Greek or German, by a Frenchman or an Englishman, carries no weight for the true itself, as true. Every true philosophy, therefore, as a national philosophy is at the same time a universally human one and, in the larger course of humanity, an indispensable part. It has the power to spread absolutely through all peoples, and for every people there comes the time when that people must acquire for itself the true philosophy of the other peoples, if it wants in other ways to further and assure its own progress."

One's antipathy to the folk aspect of the thoughts in a world view can also assume other forms. Out of a recognition of the folk aspect of such thoughts one can raise an objection against their cognitive value. One might believe that such thoughts are thrust thereby into the realm of imagination, and that one must speak of them in the same way as of a German poetry, for example, whereas it would be inadmissible to speak in the same sense of a German mathematics or a

German physics. There are people who see every world view — every philosophy — as a poetic work in concepts (*Begriffsdichtung*). Such people do not need to concern themselves with the objection that arises out of the feeling described above. But what this book presents is not written from that point of view. This book takes the position that no one can speak seriously about a world view who does not ascribe a cognitive value to it, who does not presuppose that its thoughts stem from realities common to all people. One can also say: “That is correct, in general; but a world view valid and common to all people is an ideal that has nowhere been realized as yet; all existing world views still carry with them what has been imposed upon them by the imperfection of human nature.” But we can dispense with any discussion here of imperfections existing in world views because of that human factor. For, it is certainly not our intention, in the folk characteristics of the thoughts in world views, to seek excuses for the weakness of such thoughts, but rather grounds for their strength. Therefore, we can leave out of our considerations here the assertion that thinkers, in fact, just as they are dependent upon their personal standpoints, are also dependent upon what adheres to them from their people; and that, just because of this, they cannot win through to a universally human world view. This book speaks about a series of personalities in such a way that their thoughts are acknowledged as really having universal human validity. What are characterized as errors or as one-sided views are spoken

of only insofar as one can see in them roundabout ways to the truth. If an unconditionally valid objection could spring from the feeling mentioned above, such an objection would be justified with respect to the way in which the thoughts in world views are brought into connection, in this book, with the essential being of the German people.

But one can understand the reply that must be made to this feeling only if one can free oneself from a belief which also causes serious misapprehensions in other ways. This belief is that the diverse thought-configurations of thinkers who are searching into questions of how to view the world are in fact just so many different, mutually incompatible world views.

Out of this belief the natural-scientifically minded person often opposes the mystic, and the mystic often opposes the natural-scientifically minded person. The scientist believes that natural-scientific knowledge alone is the true result of research into reality; it is from this knowledge that one must gain thoughts able to bring understanding of the world and of life, so far as this understanding is attainable to man. The mystic adheres to the view that the true being of the world reveals itself only to mystical experience, and that the thoughts of the natural-scientifically minded person cannot lay hold of genuine reality. The “monist” is content only when he pictures the existence of a unified foundation for the material and the spiritual world. One kind of monist sees this

foundation consisting in the material elements and their effects, in such a way that spiritual phenomena become for him manifestations of the material world. Other monists ascribe true being only to the spirit, and believe that everything material is only a kind of spirituality. The dualist sees in any such unification a misunderstanding both of the essential being of matter and of the spirit. In his view, both must be regarded as regions of the world that are more or less independent in themselves.

A long list would result if one wanted to characterize even just the most outstanding of these supposed world views. Now there are in fact many people who believe they have gone beyond all talk of world views. They say: "I guide myself in knowledge according to what I find within reality; what some world view or other considers reality to be does not concern me." Such people do indeed believe this; but their behavior shows something totally different. They do, in fact, more or less consciously, or even unconsciously, adhere in the most definite manner to one or another world view. Even though they do not express or think this world view directly, they do develop their picture of the world along its lines and oppose, reject, or treat the mental pictures of other people in a way corresponding to this "world view."

A misapprehension of the relationship of man to the world outside him underlies the conscious or unconscious belief in

any such supposed world views. The person who is caught up in this misapprehension does not distinguish rightly between what man receives from the outer world for the formation of his thoughts, and what he brings up out of himself when he forms thoughts.

When one notices that two thinkers express different thoughts about the questions of life, one all too readily has the feeling: If both were bringing true reality to expression in their thoughts, they would have to say the same thing, not something different. And one thinks that the difference cannot have its basis in reality but must lie only in the personal (subjective) way thinkers grasp things. Even though this is not always openly acknowledged by those who speak about world views, this opinion does underlie — more or less consciously, or even unconsciously — the spirit and style of their words. In fact, the thinkers themselves for the most part live in just such a preconception. They express their thoughts on what they consider reality to be, regard these thoughts as their “system” and rightful world view, and believe that any other direction in thought is based on the personal peculiarities of the thinker.

The presentation in this book has a different view as its background. (This view, to be sure, can at first be presented here only as an assertion. I hope the reader will be able to find in the book itself some substantiation for this assertion. In many of my other books I have made every effort to bring

much more of this substantiation.) Two divergent directions in thought, in their essential nature, can often be understood only by regarding their differences to be like those between two photographs of one tree taken from two different sides. The pictures are different; their differences, however, are not based upon the nature of the camera, but rather upon the position of the tree relative to the camera. And this position is something lying just as much outside the camera as the tree itself. The pictures are both true views of the tree. The divergent elements of two world views do not prevent them both from bringing true reality to expression.

The confusion in ideas arises when people do not understand this, when they make themselves — or are made by other people — into materialists, idealists, monists, dualists, spiritualists, mystics, or even into Theosophists, and when they mean to express by this that one arrives at a true view about life's sources only if one's whole way of thinking is in tune with one of these concepts. But it is reality itself that one wants to know from one side through materialistic ideas, from another side through spiritual ideas, from a third side as a unity (monon), from a fourth as a duality. The thinking person would like to encompass the essential being of reality through one way of picturing things. And when he notices that he undertakes this in vain, he gets around this fact by saying: All our mental pictures about the roots of real life have a personal (subjective) form, and the essential being of the

“thing-in-itself” remains unknowable.

So much confusion in our thought life could be cleared up by realizing that many a person, in speaking of a world view different from his own, is like someone who — knowing a picture of a tree taken from one side, and being presented with a picture taken from another side — does not want to admit that it is a “correct” picture of the same tree! Many “practical” people, to be sure, seek refuge from such tormenting philosophical questions by saying: “Let those fight about these things who have the leisure and the desire for it; that doesn’t affect real life; real life does not have to bother about that,” But only those can speak in this way, after all, who have absolutely no inkling of how far removed their thoughts are from the real driving powers of life. It is such people whose picture stood before the soul of Johann Gottlieb Fichte when he spoke the words: “Although, within the sphere that ordinary experience has drawn around us, people themselves are thinking more universally and judging more correctly, perhaps, than ever, still the majority of them are totally confused and blinded as soon as they are supposed to go even a short distance outside that sphere. If it is impossible to rekindle in them the spark of higher genius once that has been extinguished, then one must let them remain peacefully within that sphere, and, insofar as they are useful and indispensable within that sphere, let their value, in and for that sphere, remain undiminished. But when they themselves

now demand that everything to which they cannot lift themselves be brought down to their level, when they demand, for example, that all printed matter should be like cookbooks, arithmetic books, or service regulations, and when they decry everything that cannot be used in this way, then they themselves are in error in a major way. — We others know, perhaps as well, perhaps even better than they, that ideals as such cannot appear in outer reality. We only assert that reality must be judged according to ideals and, by those who feel the strength within them to do so, must even be changed according to ideals. When people cannot convince themselves of this fact, very little is lost to them, given that they already are who they are; and mankind loses nothing. It merely becomes clear that such people cannot be counted upon in any plan to ennoble mankind. Mankind will doubtless proceed on its way; and may benevolent nature hold sway over such people and bring them rain and sunshine at the right time, wholesome nourishment and undisturbed circulation of their juices, and also clever thoughts!”

It is actually a disaster when the ideas, fruitful for life, of the individual world views are kept at a distance from this life by the belief that their differences prove them all to be subjectively colored by the thinkers’ ways of picturing things. Through this a semblance of justification is given to the talk of those opponents of ideas just characterized. It is not the content of thinkers’ world views that condemns these world



views to fruitlessness for life, but rather the belief, following in their wake, that a particular direction in thought must reveal all of reality or else these are all views with a merely personal coloring.

This book would like to show the extent to which the truth — and not just personally colored views — lives in the ideas of individual thinkers, in spite of their differences.

Only by trying to know how far reality reveals itself in its relation to man through different ways of picturing things does one also struggle through to a sound judgment about what originates in the being of the thinker who is observing the world. One sees how the nature of one thinker is moved toward one relationship between extrahuman (objective) reality and man, and how that of another thinker is moved more toward a different relationship. First of all one sees the sharply marked, personal direction of a personality's thought. Because one notices how his world view is based upon a personal tendency in thought, one is tempted to believe that his world view is therefore only a personal (subjective) way of picturing things. But if one recognizes how a personal tendency in thought, in fact, moves the thinker to adopt a particular viewpoint through which extrahuman (objective) reality can place itself in a particular relationship to him, then one wrests oneself from the confusion into which one can fall by looking at the different world views.

Many people will perhaps reply to this: Yes, from a certain point of view, all that is completely obvious and does not need to be stated beforehand. But the person who says this is often precisely the one who, in his judgments and actions, violates this view of truth and reality everywhere.

But the view we have presented is not meant to justify every human opinion that regards itself as a world view. Actual errors, faultiness in the sources of knowledge, viewpoints from which only a beclouded fantasy would want to create thoughts for a world view: all this will in fact reveal itself in the light toward which our view is pressing. By seeking to experience the extent to which the one reality manifests itself in divergent human thoughts, our view can also hope to see where a human opinion is rejected by reality itself.

If one senses how the forces of a people work in the thinkers of a people, then this sense stands in complete harmony with the view presented here. A people does not want to decide how a thinker is to shape his thoughts; but, together with other forces determining his viewpoint, his people affects the relationship to existence through which reality, in one direction or another, manifests itself to him. His people need not cloud his power of vision; it can prove particularly able to put the thinker belonging to it in a place where he can develop a certain way of picturing the truth common to all mankind. His people does not want to judge his

knowledge; but it can be a faithfully supportive *adviser* on the way to truth. Indications about the extent to which this can be sensed with respect to the German people are meant to be given in this book by portraying a series of personalities who have arisen out of this people. The author of this book hopes that one will recognize his sense that a loving, thoughtful penetration into the particular soul nature of one people does not necessarily lead to a non-recognition and disregard for the being and worth of other peoples. At another time it would be unnecessary to state this specifically. It is necessary today in view of the feelings that are expressed from many sides about what is German.

It is completely natural for the author of this book to speak about the part played in spiritual life by both German and German-Austrian personalities; he is, after all, a German-Austrian by birth and education, who lived his first three decades of life in Austria, and then a period of time — which will soon be just as long — in Germany.

In his book *The Riddles of Philosophy* he has expressed his thinking on the place held by most of the personalities discussed in this present book within the general spiritual life. It was not his intention to repeat here what he said there. He can readily understand that someone could hold a different view than he does about the choice of the personalities portrayed. But, without striving for completeness in anyone

direction, he wanted simply to portray some things that have become perception and life experience for him.

Rudolf Steiner  
Berlin, May 1916

**Addition, for the Second Edition of 1918, to What Was Said  
in the Preceding Foreword**

If, as an observer, one confronts the “thinking, observations, and contemplations” of a personality, one can sense that one is observing forces at work in the soul of such a personality which give the direction and particular characteristics to his way of picturing things, but which he himself does not make into a content of his thinking. This sense must not lead to the vain opinion that one can place oneself as observer above the personality observed. The fact that, as an observer, one has a different viewpoint than the observed personality makes it possible for one to say many things that the other has not said — that he has indeed not confronted in his own thinking, but has left within his unconscious soul life — because through his not saying certain things, what he did say attained its full significance. The more significant what a man has to say is, the more extensive is that which holds sway unconsciously in the depths of his soul. What is unconscious in this way, however, sounds forth in the souls of those who penetrate into the thinking and contemplations of such a personality. And they

may also raise it into consciousness, because for them it can no longer hinder what they want to say.

The personalities with whom this book is concerned seem, to a particularly strong degree, to be of the kind that stimulate one to press on through what they have said to what they have left unsaid. Therefore the author of this book, from the viewpoint he has taken, believed he could make his presentation a complete one only by adding the final chapter, “New Perspectives.” He believes that in doing so he has not introduced something into the views of these personalities that does not belong there, but rather has sought the source from which these views, in the true sense of their thought content, have flowed. In this case what was left unsaid is a rich seed bed from which what has been said grew as individual fruits. If, in observing these fruits, one also becomes aware of the seed-bearing ground from which they have sprung, then precisely through this one will realize how — with respect to what the soul must experience in dealing with the most significant riddles of man — one can find in the personalities portrayed in this book a profound stimulus, powerful indications in sure directions, and strengthening forces in gaining fruitful insights. By looking at things in this way one can overcome the aversion to the seeming abstraction of the thoughts of these personalities that prevents many people from approaching them at all. One will see that these thoughts, regarded in the right way, are filled

with a boundless warmth of life — a warmth that the human being must seek if he really understands himself rightly.

## **Idealism as an Awakening of the Soul: Johann Gottlieb Fichte**

In his addresses on *The Basic Characteristics of Our Present Age* and *To the German Nation*, Johann Gottlieb Fichte seeks to portray the spiritual forces working in the evolution of mankind. Through the thoughts he brings to expression in these addresses, he imbues himself with the feeling that the motive force of his world view streams from the innermost being of the German people (*Volksart*). Fichte believes he is expressing the thoughts that the soul of the German people must express if it wants to reveal itself from the core of its spirituality. The way in which Fichte struggled for his world view shows how this feeling could live in his soul. It must seem important to someone observing a thinker to investigate the roots from which the fruit of his thoughts have sprung; these roots work in the depths of his soul and are not expressed directly in his thought-worlds, yet they live as the motive forces within these thought-worlds.

Fichte once expressed his conviction that the kind of world view one has depends upon the kind of person one is. He did so out of his awareness that all the life forces of his own personality had to bring forth — as its natural and obvious fruit — the conceptually strong heights of his world view. Not many people want to get to the heart of this world view because they consider what they find there to be thoughts — estranged from the world — into which only “professional”

thinkers need penetrate. This feeling is understandable in someone without philosophical training who approaches Fichte's thoughts as they appear in his works. Still, for someone who has the possibility of entering into the full life of these thoughts, it is not strange to imagine that a time will come when one will be able to recast Fichte's ideas into a form comprehensible to anyone who wants, out of life itself, to think about the meaning of this life. These ideas could then be accessible even to the simplest human heart (*Gemüt*), however far removed from so-called "philosophical thinking." For, these ideas have in fact received their philosophical form from the character assumed by the evolution of thought in thinking circles at the turn of the eighteenth into the nineteenth century; but these ideas get their life from experiences that are present in the soul of every human being. To be sure, the time has not yet arrived when it is fully possible to recast Fichte's thoughts from the language of the philosophy of his time into a universally human form of expression. Such things become possible only through the gradual progress made by certain ways of picturing things in man's spiritual life. Just as Fichte himself was obliged to carry his soul experiences to the heights of what one usually calls "abstract thinking" — and finds cold and estranged from life — so today also it is only possible to a very limited degree to carry these soul experiences down from those heights.

From his early youth until his sudden death while still in the



prime of life, Fichte struggled for ever new forms of expression for these soul experiences. In all his struggles, one basic cognitive impulse is evident. Within man's own soul Fichte wishes to find a living element in which the human being grasps not only the basic force of his own existence, but in which there can also be known — in its essential being — what weaves and works in nature and in everything else outside him. In a drop of water, relative to the ocean, one has only a tiny sphere. But if one knows this little sphere in its character as water, then in this knowledge one also knows the whole ocean in its character as water. If something can be discovered in the being of man that can be experienced as a revelation of the innermost weaving of the world, then one may hope, through deepened self-knowledge, to advance to world knowledge.

Long before Fichte's time, the development of mankind's view of the world had already taken the path that proceeds from this feeling and this hope. But Fichte was placed at a significant point in this evolution. One can read in many places how he received his most direct impetus from the world views of Spinoza and Kant. But the way he finally acted in understanding the world through the essential nature of his personality becomes most visible when he is contrasted with the thinker who came forth just as much from the thinking of the Romance peoples as Fichte did from the German: Descartes (1596–1650). In Descartes there already comes to

light — out of the feeling and hope described above — the way a thinker seeks certainty in world knowledge by discovering a solid point in self-knowledge. Descartes takes doubt in all world knowledge as his starting point. He says to himself: The world in which I live reveals itself within my soul, and from its phenomena I form mental pictures for myself about the course of things. But what is my guarantee that these mental pictures of mine really tell me anything about the working and weaving of the world in its course? Could it not be the case that my soul does indeed receive certain impressions from the things of the world, but that these impressions are so far removed from the things themselves that in these impressions nothing of the meaning of the world is revealed to me? In the face of this possibility can I say that I know this or that about the world? One sees how, for a thinker in this ocean of doubt, all knowledge can come to seem like a subjective dream, and how only *one* conviction can force itself upon him: that man can know nothing. But in the case of a person for whom the motive force of thinking has become as alive as the motive force of hunger is in the body: for him the conviction that man can know nothing means for the soul what starvation means for the body. All the innermost impressions about the health of one's soul, in a higher sense, right up to feeling the salvation of one's soul (*Seelenheil*) are connected with this.

It is within the soul itself that Descartes finds the point upon

which he can base conviction: The mental pictures form for myself of the world's course are no dream; they live a life that is a part in the life of the whole world. Even though I can doubt everything, there is *one* thing I cannot doubt, for to express doubt in *it* would belie my own words. For is it not certain that when I give myself over to doubt *I am thinking*? I could not doubt if I did not think. Therefore I cannot possibly doubt my own experience in thinking. If I wanted, through doubt, to kill thinking: it would just rise up living again out of the doubt. My thinking lives, therefore; it does not stand in some dream world; it stands in the *world of being* (*Sein*). If I could believe that everything else, even my own body, gave me only the illusion of *being*, still my thinking does not deceive me. Just as true as it is that I think, it is true that I *am*, insofar as I think. It was from sentiments such as these that Descartes' "I think, therefore I am" (*Cogito ergo sum*) rang out into the world. And whoever has an ear for such things will also hear the power of this statement resounding in all subsequent thinkers until Kant.

Only with Fichte do its reverberations cease. If one enters deeply into his thought-world, if one seeks to experience with him his struggles for a world view, then one feels how he too is seeking world knowledge in self-knowledge; but one has the feeling that Descartes' statement, "I think, therefore I am" could not be the rock upon which Fichte, in his struggles, could believe himself secure against the waves of doubt that

can turn man's mental pictures into an ocean of dreams. Looking at what Fichte wrote in his book *The Vocation of Man* (published in 1800), one feels how his ability to doubt lives in a very different part of the soul than with Descartes: "Nowhere is there anything enduring, neither outside me nor within me; there is only unceasing change. Nowhere do I know of any being, not even my own. There is no *being*. I *myself* do not know at all and do not exist. *Pictures* exist: they are all that there is, and they know about themselves in the manner of pictures — pictures that float past without anything there for them float past; pictures that relate to each other through pictures of pictures; pictures without anything pictured in them, without significance and purpose. I myself am one of these pictures; no, I am not even that; I am only a confused picture of the pictures. — All reality transforms itself into a strange dream, without a life that is dreamed about, and without a spirit who is dreaming; transforms itself into a dream that is connected with a dream about itself, My *perceiving* is the dream; my *thinking* — the source of all being and all reality that I imagine to myself, the source of *my* being, my power, my aims — is a dream about that dream," These thoughts do not arise in Fichte's soul as the ultimate truth about existence, He does not wish, as one might suppose, really to regard the world as a dream configuration, He wants only to show that all the usual arguments for the certainty of knowledge cannot withstand penetrating examination, and that these arguments do not give one the right to regard the

ideas one forms about the world as anything other than dream configurations. And Fichte cannot allow that any kind of certainty about being is present within thinking. Why should I say, “I think, therefore I am” since, after all, if I am living in an ocean of dreams, my thinking can be nothing more than “a dream about a dream”? For Fichte, what penetrates and gives reality to my thoughts about the world must come from a completely different source than mere thinking about the world.

Fichte claims that the distinctive spirit (*Art*) of the German people lives in his world view. This thought makes sense when one brings before one’s soul precisely his picture of that path to self-knowledge which he seeks in contradistinction to Descartes. This path is what Fichte felt to be *German*; and as a traveler on this path, he differs from Descartes, who takes the spiritual path of the Romance peoples. Descartes seeks a sound basis for self-knowledge; he expects to find this sound basis somewhere. In thinking he believes he has found it. Fichte expects nothing from this kind of search. For, no matter what he might find, why should it afford a greater certainty than anything already found? No, along this path of investigation there is absolutely nothing to be found. For, this path can lead only from *picture to picture*; and no picture one encounters can guarantee, out of itself, its *being*. Therefore, to begin with, one must entirely abandon the path through pictures, and return to it again only after gaining certainty from

some other direction.

With respect to the statement “I think, therefore I am,” one need only say something that seems quite simple if one wants to refute it. This is after all the way with so many thoughts a person incorporates into his world view: they are not dispelled by elaborate objections but rather by noting simple facts. One does not undervalue the thinking power of a personality like Descartes by confronting him with a simple fact. The fable of the egg of Columbus is true forever<sup>1</sup>. And it is also true that the statement “I think, therefore I am” simply shatters upon the fact of human sleep. Every sleep, which interrupts thinking, shows — not, indeed, that there is no being in thinking — but that in any case “I am, even when I am not thinking.” Therefore, if only thinking is the source for *being*, then nothing could guarantee the *being* of soul states in which thinking has ceased. Although Fichte did not express this train of thought in this form, one can still definitely say: The power lying within these simple facts worked — unconsciously — in his soul and kept him from taking a path like that taken by Descartes.

Fichte was led onto a completely different path by the basic character of his sense of things. His life reveals this basic character from childhood on. One need only let some pictures from his life arise before one’s soul to see that this is so. One significant picture that rises up vividly from his childhood is

this. Johann Gottlieb is seven years old. Until this time he was a good student. In order to reward the boy's industriousness, his father gives him a book of legends, *The Horned Siegfried*. The boy is completely taken with this book. He neglects his duties somewhat. He becomes aware of this about himself. One day his father sees him throwing *The Horned Siegfried* into the brook. The boy is attached to the book with his whole heart; but how can the heart be allowed to keep something that diverts one from one's *duty*? Thus the feeling is already living *unconsciously* in the young Fichte that the human being is in the world as an expression of a higher order, which descends into his soul not through his interest in one thing or another, but through the path by which he acknowledges *duty*. Here one can see the impulse behind Fichte's stance toward certainty about reality. Perceptual experiences are not what is certain for man, but rather what rises up livingly in the soul in the same way that duty reveals itself.

Another picture from Fichte's life: The boy is nine years old. A landowner near his father's village comes into town one Sunday to hear the minister's sermon. He arrives too late. The sermon is over. People remember that nine-year-old Johann Gottlieb retains sermons in his soul so well that he can completely reproduce them. They fetch him. The boy, in his little farmer's smock, appears. He is awkward at first; but then presents the sermon in such a way that one can see that what lived in the sermon had utterly filled his soul; he does not

merely repeat words; he speaks out of the spirit of the sermon that lives within him entirely as his own experience. This ability lived in the boy: to let light up in one's own self what approaches this self from the world. This was, after all, the ability to experience the spirit of the outer world in one's own self. This was the ability to find within the strengthened self the power to uphold a world view. A brightly-lit, evolving stream of personality leads from such boyhood experiences to a lecture by Fichte — then professor in Jena — heard and described by the gifted scientist Steffens. In the course of his lecture Fichte calls upon his listeners: "Think about the wall," His listeners made every effort to think about the wall. After they had done this for a while, Fichte's next demand follows: "And now think about the one who thought about the wall," What striving for a direct and living relationship between one's own soul life and that of one's listeners! What pointing toward an inner soul activity to be undertaken immediately — not merely to stimulate reflection on verbal communications, but rather to awaken a life element slumbering in the souls of his listeners so that these souls will attain a state that changes their previous relationship to the course of the world.

Such actions reflect Fichte's whole way of clearing the path for a world view. Unlike Descartes, he does not seek an experience of thinking that will establish certainty. He knows that in such seeking there is no finding. In such seeking one cannot know whether one's discovery is dream or reality.



Therefore do not launch forth in such seeking. Strengthen yourself instead, by *waking up*. What the soul experiences when it wants to press forward out of the field of ordinary reality into that of true reality must be like an awakening. Thinking does not guarantee the *being* of the human “I.” But within this “I” there lies the power to awaken itself to *being*. Every time the soul senses itself as “I” — in full consciousness of the inner power that becomes active in doing so — a process occurs that presents itself as the soul awakening itself. This self-awakening is the fundamental being (*Grundwesenheit*) of the soul. And in this power to awaken itself there lies the certainty of the *being* (*Sein*) of the human soul. Let the soul go through dream states and states of sleep: one grasps the power of the soul to awaken itself out of every dream and every sleep by transforming the mental picture of its awakening into the image of the soul’s fundamental power. Fichte felt that the eternity of the human soul lies in its becoming aware of its power to awaken itself. From this awareness came statements like these: “The world I was just marveling at disappears before my gaze and sinks away. In all the fullness of life, order, and growth that I see in it, this world is still only the curtain — by which an infinitely more perfect world is hidden from me — and the seed from which this more perfect world is to evolve. My belief goes behind this curtain and warms and enlivens this seed. My belief does not see anything definite, but expects more than it can grasp here below or will ever be able to grasp in the

realm of time. — This is how I live and this is how I am; this is how I am unchangeably — firm and complete for all eternity; for, this being is not taken on from outside; it is my own one true being and existence.” (*Vocation of Man*)

When one looks at the whole way Fichte approaches life and at how permeated all his actions and thinking are with an attitude friendly to life and fostering of life, one will not be tempted to regard a passage like this as proof of a direction in thought hostile to life, that turns away from immediate and vigorous life on this earth. In a letter from the year 1790 there is a sentence that sheds significant light on Fichte’s positive attitude toward life, precisely in relation to his thoughts about immortality: “The surest means of convincing oneself of a life after death is to lead one’s present life in such a way that one can wish an afterlife:”

For Fichte, within the self-awakening inner activity of the human soul there lies the power of self-knowledge. And within this activity he also finds the place in the soul where the spirit of the world reveals itself in the spirit of the soul. In Fichte’s world view the *world-will* weaves and works in all existence; and within the willing of its own being the soul can live this world-will within itself. The grasping of life’s duties — which are experienced differently in the soul than are the perceptions of the senses and of one’s thoughts — is the most immediate example of how the world-will pulses through

the soul. True reality must be grasped in this way; and all other reality, even that of thinking, receives its certainty through the light shed upon it by the reality of the world-will revealing itself within the soul. This world-will drives the human being to his activity and deeds. As a sense-perceptible being, man must translate into reality in a sense-perceptible way what the world-will demands of him. But how could the deeds of one's will have a real existence if they had to seek this existence in a dream world? No, the world cannot be a dream, because in this world the deeds of one's will must not merely be dreamed; they must be translated into reality.

Insofar as the "I" awakens itself in its experience of the world-will, it attains firm supports for certainty about its *being*. Fichte expressed himself on this point in his *Vocation of Man*: "Without any instrument weakening its expression, within a sphere completely similar in nature to itself, my will must work absolutely in and through itself: as reason it must work upon reason and as something spiritual upon something spiritual; it must work in a sphere for which my will nevertheless does not provide the laws of life, activity, and continuity; this sphere has them in itself; my will has therefore to work upon *self-active* reason. But self-active reason is will. The laws of the supersensible world, accordingly, would be a *will* ... That lofty will, accordingly, does not separated from the rest of the world of reason — take a path all its own. There is a spiritual bond between this will and all finite reasonable beings, and this will

itself is the spiritual bond of the world of reason ... I hide my face before you and lay my hand on my mouth. I can never see how you are for yourself nor how you appear to yourself, just as certainly as I can never become yourself. After living through a thousand times a thousand spiritual worlds, I will still grasp you just as little as now, within this hut of the earth. — What I grasp, through my mere grasping of it, becomes something finite; and this, even through infinite intensification and enhancement, can never be transformed into something infinite. You are different from the finite not in degree but in kind. Through that intensification they make you only into a greater and ever great man; but never into God, the Infinite, Who cannot be measured.”

Fichte strove for a world view that pursues all being into the very roots of what lives in the world, and that learns to know the meaning of what lives in the world: learns to know it through the human soul's living with the world-will that pulses through everything and that creates nature for the purpose, in nature, of translating into reality a spiritually moral order as though in an outer body. Such a world view seemed to Fichte to spring from the character of the German people. To him a world view seemed un-German that did not “*believe* in spirituality and in the freedom of this spirituality,” and that did not “*want* the eternal further development of this spirituality and freedom.” In his view, “Whoever believes in a standstill, a regression, or a circle dance, or even sets a dead nature at

the helm of world rulership” goes not only against any more deeply penetrating knowledge, but also against the essential nature of what is truly German.

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Notes:

1. The problem was to stand an egg on end. Columbus’s table companions tried to do this without breaking the egg and of course failed. Columbus was more realistic. He flattened one end of the egg. – Ed.

## **Idealism as a View about Nature and the Spirit: Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling**

At the beginning of his search for a world view, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling is close to Fichte insofar as the same picture of the soul — whose grasping of itself in the activity of self-awakening assures it of existence — becomes for him the sure support of knowledge. But from this basic feeling in Schelling's spirit different thoughts stream forth than from Fichte's spirit. For Fichte, the all-encompassing world-will shines into the awakening soul as a spiritual realm of light; and he wants to know the rays of this light in their essential being. For Schelling, the world riddle consists in the fact that he sees himself, with his soul awakened to egohood, confronted by a seemingly mute and lifeless nature. Out of this nature the soul awakens. This fact reveals itself to human observation. And the knowing, feeling human spirit delves down into this nature and through this nature fills itself with an inner world that then becomes spiritual life within it. Could this be so if there did not exist between the soul and nature a deeply inward relatedness at first hidden from human cognition? But nature remains mute if the soul does not make itself into the instrument of nature's speech; nature seems dead if the spirit of man does not free life from the spell of semblance (*Schein*). The secrets of nature must sound forth from the depths of the human soul. But in order for this not to be a deception, it must be the essential being of nature itself that speaks out of the human soul. And it must be true that

the soul only seemingly goes down into its own depths when it knows nature; in actuality, when it wants to find nature, the soul must travel through subconscious passages in order to delve down with its own life into the cycle of nature's weaving.

Schelling sees in nature — as it is present to ordinary human consciousness — only a physiognomical expression of true nature, so to speak, just as one sees in a human countenance the expression of the supersensible soul. And just as one lives into the soul of a person through this physiognomical expression — if one is able to take up the other person's experiences into one's own — so, for Schelling, there is a possibility of so awakening human cognitive abilities that they experience within themselves what works and weaves behind the outer countenance of nature as soul and spirit. Therefore, one cannot consider our science of this outer countenance to be a revelation of what lives in the depths of nature; nor is the cognitive power of man that is limited to such science capable of unraveling the true secrets of nature. Schelling therefore wants to bring to awakening in the human soul an intellectual beholding (*intellektuelle Anschauung*) that lies behind the ordinary cognitive power of man. This kind of beholding reveals itself — in Schelling's sense — as a creative power in man; but in such a way that it does not create concepts from the soul *about* nature, but rather, through inward co-existence with the soul element of nature, brings to manifestation the powers of ideas creating

and ruling in nature. Fearful souls quake at the thought of a view of nature that is supposed to stem from this kind of an “intellectual beholding.” And the scorn and ridicule heaped upon it in the period after Schelling was great. For someone who knows how to avoid one-sidedness in these matters, there need not be the two conflicting alternatives: either to surrender to “the daydreams of nature fantasies like those of a Schelling” and bring a charge of “gross materialism” against proper, serious natural science; or maturely to take the standpoint of this science and “dismiss all Schellingian playing with concepts as childishness.” One can belong unreservedly to those who want to promote natural science to the full as demanded by our modern “natural-scientific age”; and one can nevertheless understand the justification for Schelling’s attempt to create, above and beyond this natural science, a view of nature that enters an area that this natural science will not want to touch at all if it rightly understands itself. But the belief is unjustified which asserts that, *besides* the natural science created by our ordinary cognitive powers, there can exist no view of nature that is attained by means different from those particular to this natural science as such. Why must the natural scientist believe that his field is safe *only* if everyone else striving from a different point of view is silenced? For someone who will not let himself be blinded in these matters by “natural-scientific fanaticism,” the often so bitter rejection of a view of nature more in accordance with the spirit — such as that for which Schelling strove — seems no different, after all,



than if a lover of photography were to say: “I make exact pictures of people that reproduce everything about them: just don’t try to compare the portrait a painter makes with my kind of faithfulness to nature.”

With awakened spiritual beholding Schelling wanted to find the “spirit of nature,” for which not only sense perception but also what one calls laws of nature are merely the physiognomical expression. It is important that we place before our souls the enormous impression he made in such strivings upon those of his contemporaries who had an open heart for the way this striving burst forth from his powerful, spirit-illuminated personality. There is a description, given by an amiable and gifted thinker, Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, of the impressions he received of Schelling’s effect in Jena. “What was it,” he writes, “that so powerfully drew both young and old from far and near to attend his lectures? Was it only the personality of the man or the particular charm of his speaking style that had such power to attract people? ... It wasn’t that alone. ... In his lively words there lay, to be sure, an inspiring power irresistible to young souls with any receptivity at all. It might be difficult to make comprehensible to a reader in our day,” (Schubert is now writing down in 1854 what he had experienced about Schelling in the 1790’s) “who did not participate in and hear this as a young person like I did, how it often affected me when Schelling spoke to us: I felt as though I were reading or hearing Dante, the seer in

another world open only to the initiated eye. The mighty content that lay in his words — which themselves were measured, mathematically precise, and of an elegance suitable for inscription in stone — seemed to me like a bound Prometheus, presenting the understanding spirit with the task of loosing his bonds and receiving from his hand the unquenchable fire. ... But neither his personality nor the enlivening power of his speaking style could account for the interest and excitement — for or against his direction in thought — aroused by Schelling's world view immediately after it was made public in his writings; no other literary publication of this kind, long before or after, aroused such interest and excitement. When a teacher or writer speaks about sense-perceptible things or natural phenomena, one can tell right away whether he is doing so out of his own observation and experience or merely repeating what he has heard others say — or even what he has thought up out of pictures of his own. ... And it is the same with inner experience. There is a reality of a higher kind, whose existence can be experienced by the knowing spirit in us with the same sureness and certainty as our body, through its senses, experiences the existence of outer visible nature. This nature — the reality of bodily things — presents itself to our perceiving senses as a *deed* of that same creative power through which our bodily nature has also come about. The existence of the visible world is an actual fact in the same way as the existence of the perceiving senses. Reality of a higher

kind, as a spiritually embodied fact, has also approached the knowing spirit in us; our knowing spirit will become aware of this reality when its own knowing activity lifts itself to a recognition of that by which our spirit is known and from which, according to a common, regular order, there emerges the reality of both bodily and spiritual evolution. And this becoming aware of a spiritual, divine reality in which we ourselves live, weave, and exist is the highest gain of earthly life and of the search for wisdom. ... Already in my day, among the young people who heard Schelling, there were some who had an inkling of what he meant by the 'intellectual beholding' through which our spirit must grasp the infinite primal ground of all being and becoming."

It was the spirit in nature that Schelling sought through intellectual beholding, the spiritual that, from the power of its creativity, brought forth nature. Nature was once the living body of this spiritual, just as the human body is so for the soul. Now it is spreading out, this body of the world spirit, revealing in its traits what once the spiritual incorporated into it, and showing, in its weaving and becoming, gestures that represent the workings of the spiritual. This spiritual working within the world body had to precede the present state of the world, so that this world body could grow hard and produce in the mineral realm a bony system, in the plant realm a nervous system, in the animal realm a soul forerunner of man. In this way the world body was led out of its youth into its old age;

the present-day mineral, plant, and animal realms are, so to speak, the hardened products of what once was accomplished, in a spiritually embodied way, by an evolution that is now extinguished. Out of the womb of the aged body of the world, however, the creative spirituality could allow the soul and spirit-endowed human being to arise; within his inner life there shine forth to his knowledge the ideas with which the creative spirituality first brought about the world body. As though enchanted, there lies within present-day nature the spirit that once lived and worked in it; within the human soul this spirit becomes disenchanting. (This presentation of Schelling's relationship to nature is certainly not to be found in any actual words or even in any thoughts used by Schelling himself. Nevertheless, I believe that one can *truly* reproduce a person's view with such conciseness only if one fixes one's eye upon the spirit of his view, and, in order to express this spirit, uses mental pictures arising in a free way to say in a few words what the original personality expressed in a series of extensive works. Used to this end, the actual words of the personality can only misrepresent the spirit of these words.)

Taking this stance toward the "spirit of nature" and its relationship to the human spirit, Schelling felt himself faced by the necessity of learning how to understand that element in the world which intrudes upon and disrupts the course of world events. Insofar as the soul gives itself over to the world of ideas holding sway in everything, the soul will knowingly

experience the progressive creativity of this world of ideas. But, as though from a different direction of world existence, a disruptive, evil, malevolent element forces its way in. With the world of ideas the knowing soul does not at first enter this different field; this field borders on the world of ideas as the shadow borders on the light. Just as the light cannot be present in a shadowed space, so also the activities undertaken by the soul in its first attempts in knowledge cannot be present in the realm of disruption, evil, and malevolence. In seeking a possibility of penetrating into this region, Schelling received a stimulus from that personality who, out of the simplest feeling life of the German people, sought the solution for lofty riddles of the world: Jakob Böhme. To be sure, Jakob Böhme did read a lot about questions concerning world views and also did take up a great deal in other ways through the educational channels available to a simple man of the people in the German culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but the best thing that pulses through Jakob Böhme's writings in such an unlearned way is a popular path of knowledge; what is best there comes from the deeper heart (*Gemüt*) of the people itself. And Schelling lifted up into the mode of thinking contemplation what was seen by this deeper heart of the people in Jakob Böhme's unlearned but enlightened soul. It belongs to the most magnificent observations one can make in world literature to see Jakob Böhme's elemental heart's view shining through the philosophical language of Schelling's

*Treatise on the Essential Being of Man's Freedom*<sup>1</sup>. Within this elemental heart's view, the profound insight holds sway that no one can arrive at a satisfying world view whose only means on the path of knowledge are those of *thinking comprehension*. Out of the depths of the world, something bursts into the circumference of what thinking comprehension is; this something is more far-reaching and powerful than thinking comprehension, but not more powerful actually than what the soul can experience within itself when thinking comprehension appears to the soul only as a part of the soul's own essential being. If one wants to comprehend something, one must understand how this something is *necessarily* connected with something else. The things of the world are indeed connected to each other necessarily on the surface, but not in the deepest foundation of the world's essential being. Freedom holds sway in the world. And only he comprehends the world who beholds free, supersensible spirituality holding sway within the necessitated course taken by the laws of nature. Freedom as a fact can always be refuted by logical reasons. Whoever realizes this is not impressed by any refutation of the idea of freedom.

Jakob Böhme's thoroughly healthy way of knowledge — his original deeper heart's knowledge, so in accordance with the feeling of the people — beheld freedom as weaving and working through everything necessitated, working even through natural necessity. And Schelling, ascending from a

view of nature in accordance with the spirit to a beholding of the spirit, felt himself in harmony with Jakob Böhme.

And with this the path was given him for beholding the historical evolution of the spiritual life of mankind in his own way. The deed of Christ fitted into this evolution as the greatest event on earth. Through his *Philosophy of Mythology* Schelling sought to understand what had occurred before this deed. Whoever believes that in history only ideas that follow necessarily from each other are revealed, does not understand the course of the world. For with freedom supersensible being reaches into this course from stage to stage; and what freedom accomplishes at each new stage can only be *beheld* as a fact revealed to the deeper heart (*Germüt*); it cannot be thought up beforehand, by logical deduction from the evolution of ideas until then, as a *necessitated* next stage. And what supersensible worlds, in the evolution of the earth, have let stream in through Christ must be taken as a completely free fact; not as a revelation needing illumination by ideas, but as a revelation shining out over any world of ideas. Schelling wants to speak about this world view of his in his *Philosophy of Revelation*.

Certainly, the “contradiction” in which this way of picturing things gets entangled is easy to point out. And this “contradiction” was held up to Schelling in every possible form, both well-meaning and malicious. Nevertheless,

whoever raises this “contradiction” only shows that he does not want to recognize the reigning of free spirituality in the course of a world process that seems necessitated. Schelling did not want to deny the working of natural necessity; but he wanted to show how even this necessity is a deed of the spirituality that works through the world with freedom. And he did not want, as it were, to renounce comprehension just because the first attempts of this comprehension shatter upon the boundary of world freedom; he wanted to ascend to a comprehension of what the world of ideas holding sway in everything does not have within itself but can *take up* into itself. The ideas that want to know the world do not need to bow out just because *mere* thinking comprehension is inadequate for knowledge of life. One need not say: Because ideas, with what at first lies within their own being, do not penetrate into the depths of the world, therefore the depths of the world cannot be known. No, when ideas give themselves over to these depths and become permeated by what ideas do not have in themselves, then these ideas rise up from the ground of the world, newborn and wafted through by the essential being of the “spirit of the world.”

From the seventeenth century, the deeper heart of the German people in the Görlitz shoemaker Jakob Böhme, working on in Schelling’s philosophical spirit, arrived at a world view like this in the nineteenth century.

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Note:

1. *Freiheit* literally means “freedom.” *Freiheit* does not focus so much on “freedom” from something. It means activating the spiritual forces of one’s own “I.” For Rudolf Steiner, freedom is “action, thinking, and feeling from out of the spiritual individuality of man”; it is “spiritual activity.” – Ed.

## **Idealism as the Beholding of Thoughts: Hegel**

Through Hegel, the “I think, therefore I am” seems to spring up again in the evolution of German world views like a seed, fallen into the earth, arises as a wide-branching tree. For, what this thinker created as a world view is a comprehensive thought-painting or, so to speak, a many-membered thought-body, consisting of numerous single thoughts that mutually carry, support, move, enliven, and illuminate one another. What is meant here by thoughts does not stem from the sense impressions of the outer world, nor even from the everyday experiences of human feeling life (*Gemüt*); what is meant is thoughts that reveal themselves in the soul when the soul lifts itself out of its sense impressions and out of the experiences of its feeling life and makes itself into an onlooker of the process by which a thought, free of everything of a non-thought nature, unfolds into further and ever further thoughts. When the soul allows this process to occur within itself, it is then supposedly lifted out of its usual being and interwoven with its activity into the spiritually supersensible world order. Then it is not the soul that thinks; the world-all thinks within the soul; the soul becomes a participant in a happening outside man into which man is merely interwoven; and in this way the soul experiences within itself what works and weaves in the depths of the world.

Looking at this more closely, one can see that Hegel seeks his world view from a completely different viewpoint than from

Descartes's "I think, therefore I am." Descartes wants to draw certainty about the existence of the soul from the soul's thinking. With Hegel it is a matter of saying nothing at first about the thinking of the individual human soul. but of shaping the life of this soul in such a way that its thinking becomes a revelation of world thinking. Then. Hegel believes, what lives as thought in all world existence will reveal itself; and the individual soul finds itself as a part in this thought-weaving of the world. From this point of view the soul must say: The highest and deepest thing that *is* and lives in the world is the creative reigning of thoughts, and I find myself as one of the ways this reigning element reveals itself.

In this turn away from the individual thoughts of the soul and toward world thoughts above and beyond the soul. there lies the significant difference between Hegel and Descartes; Hegel made this turn; Descartes did not.

And this difference brings about another one relative to the development of the world views of both men. Descartes seeks certainty for the thoughts that the human being forms in the life in which he stands with his senses and his soul. Hegel at first does not seek within the field of *these* thoughts; he seeks a form of thought-life that lies *above* and *beyond* this field.

If Hegel did in fact remain in the region of thoughts and found himself therefore to be in opposition to Fichte and

Schelling, he did so only because he believed he felt, in thoughts themselves, the inner power needed to penetrate into the supersensible realm. Hegel was an enthusiast with respect to the experience man can have when he gives himself over entirely to the primal power of thoughts. In the light of a thought raised to an idea, the soul, for him, extricates itself from its connection with the sense world. One can feel the power lying in this enthusiasm of Hegel when one encounters in his writings — in which for many people there reigns such a repellent, knotty, yes, it seems, horribly abstract language-passages that often show so beautifully the heart's tones he can find for what he experiences with his “abstractions.” Just such a passage, for example, stands at the end of his *Phenomenology*. There he calls the knowing that the soul experiences when it lets world ideas hold sway within it “absolute knowing.” And at the end of this book he looks back upon those spirits who have striven for the goal of “absolute knowing” in the course of mankind's evolution. Looking back from his era, he finds the following words to say about these spirits: “*The goal* — absolute knowing, or the spirit knowing itself as spirit — has as its path the memory of spirits, as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their kingdom. Their preservation of their free existence, on the one hand, appearing in the form of chance happening, is history; but their preservation of their comprehended organization, on the other hand, is the *science of manifest knowing*; both together — comprehended history

— constitute the memory and the Golgotha (*Schädelstätte*) of the absolute spirit, the reality, truth, and certainty of its throne, without which the absolute spirit would be lifeless and alone; only —

From the cup of this realm of spirits  
Foams for it its infinitude.”

This inwardly powerful element of a thought-life that wants to overcome itself within itself in order to lift itself into a realm where it is no longer living in itself but where the infinite thought, the eternal idea, is living in it: that is the essential element in Hegel’s seeking. Through this, higher striving in knowledge receives a far-reaching character with him that wants to guide toward *one* goal directions in this striving that are often separated and therefore proceeding one-sidedly. In Hegel one can find a pure thinker who wants to approach the solution to the riddle of the world only through a human reason free of mysticism. One can speak of ice-cold abstract thoughts by which alone he wants to comprehend the world. Thus one will be able to see in him the dry, mathematically inclined man of intellect. But where does *living* in the ideas of one’s reason lead him? It leads him to the surrender of the human soul to the supersensible world powers holding sway in the soul. Living in these ideas becomes a true mystical experience. And it is absolutely not nonsensical to recognize mysticism in Hegel’s world view. One must only have a sense

for the fact that what the mystic expresses can be experienced in Hegel's works in connection with the ideas of one's reason. It is a mysticism that removes the personal element — which for the mystic of feeling is the main thing, and the only thing he wants to speak about — as in fact a personal matter for the soul itself, and that expresses only that to which mysticism can lift itself when it struggles up out of personal soul darkness into the radiant clarity of the world of ideas.

Hegel's world view has its place in the course of mankind's spiritual evolution through the fact that in it the radiant power of thoughts lifts itself up out of the mystical depths of the soul, and through the fact that in Hegel's seeking, mystical power wants to reveal itself with the power of the light of thought. And this is also how he sees his place in the course of this evolution. Therefore he looked back upon Jakob Böhme in the way expressed in these words (to be found in his *History of Philosophy*): "This Jakob Böhme, long forgotten and decried as a pietistic visionary, has regained his rightful esteem only in recent times; Leibniz revered him. His public has been greatly reduced by the Age of Enlightenment; in recent times his profundity has been recognized again. ... To declare him a visionary means nothing. For if one wants to, one can call every philosopher so, even Epicurus and Bacon. ... But as to the high esteem to which Böhme has been raised, he owes this particularly to the form of his contemplation and feeling;

for, contemplation and inner feeling ... and the pictorial nature of one's thoughts the allegories and so on — are partly considered to be the essential form of philosophy. But it is only the concept, thinking, in which philosophy can have its truth, in which the absolute can be expressed and also is as it is in and for itself.” And Hegel finds these further words for Böhme: “Jakob Böhme is the first German philosopher; the content of his *philosophizing* is truly German. What distinguishes Böhme and makes him remarkable is ... that he set the intellectual world into his own inner life (*Gemüt*), and within his own consciousness of himself he beheld, knew, and felt everything that used to be in the beyond. This general idea of Böhme proves on the one hand to be profound and basic; on the other hand, however, he does not achieve clarity and order in all his need and struggle for definition and discrimination in developing his divine views about the universe.”

Such words are spoken by Hegel, after all, only from the feeling: In the simple heart of Jakob Böhme there lived the deepest impulse of the human soul to sink itself with its own experience into world experience — the true mystical impulse — but the pictorial view, the parable, the symbol must lift themselves to the light of clear ideas in order to attain what they want. In Hegel's world view Jakob Böhme's world pictures are meant to arise again as ideas of human reason. Thus the enthusiast of thoughts, Hegel, stands beside the

deep mystic, Jakob Böhme, within the evolution of German idealism. Hegel saw in Böhme's philosophizing something truly German, and Karl Rosenkranz, the biographer and independent student of Hegel, wrote a book, *Hegel as the German National Philosopher*, for the celebration of Hegel's hundredth birthday in 1870, in which these words occur: "One can assert that Hegel's system of thought is the most national one in Germany, and that after the earlier dominion of the Kantian and Schellingian systems, none has reached so deeply into the national movement, into the furthering of German intelligence, into the elucidation of public opinion, into the encouraging of the will ... as that of Hegel."

With such words Karl Rosenkranz does in fact, to a high degree, speak the truth about a phenomenon of German spiritual life, even though, on the other hand, Hegel's striving had already encountered the most bitter and scornful opposition in the decades before these words were written — an opposition whose beginnings were described in significant words by Rosenkranz himself soon after Hegel's death: "When I consider the fury with which Hegelian philosophy was attacked, I am surprised that Hegel's expression, that 'the idea in its movement is a circle of circles,' has not moved people to call his philosophy Dante's funnel into hell, which narrows toward the end and finally brings one up against Satan incarnate" (Rosenkrantz: From *My Notebook*. Leipzig 1854).



There can be very different viewpoints from which a person seeks to describe the impression he gains of a thinker personality like Hegel. In another place (in his book *Riddles of Philosophy*) the present author attempted to show the view one can attain about Hegel when one fixes one's eye on his work as a stage in the philosophical evolution of mankind. Here this author would like to speak only of what comes to expression through Hegel as one of the strengths of German idealism in world views. This is trust in the carrying power of thinking. Every page in Hegel's works strengthens this trust which finally culminates in the conviction: When the human being fully understands what he has in his thinking, then he also knows that he can attain entry into a supersensible spiritual world. Through Hegel, German idealism has accomplished the affirmation of the supersensible nature of thinking. And one can have the feeling that Hegel's strengths, and also his weaknesses, are connected with the fact that one time in the course of the world a personality had to stand there for whom all life and work are ensouled by this affirmation. Then one sees in Hegel's world view a source from which to draw what can be gained from this affirmation in the way of strength for life, without perhaps accepting the content of the Hegelian world view in anyone point.

If one relates in such a way to this thinker personality, one can receive a stimulus from him, and along with it the stimulus of one strong element of German idealism; and from this

stimulus one can gain the strength to form a completely different picture of the world than that painted by Hegel himself. As strange as it may sound: Hegel is perhaps best understood when one directs the power of cognitive striving that held sway in him onto paths that he himself never took at all.

Hegel felt the supersensible nature of thinking with all the power available to man in this direction. But he had to expend so much human strength in conducting this feeling through a complete thinking process for once, that he was not able himself to lead the supersensible nature of thinking up into supersensible realms. The exemplary psychologist, Franz Brentano expresses in his *Psychology* how modern psychology does indeed investigate the ordinary life of the soul in a strictly scientific way, but, in these investigations, has lost all perspective into the great questions of soul existence. He says: "The laws of mental association, of the development of convictions and opinions, and of the germinating of pleasure and love, all these would be anything but a true compensation for not gaining certainty about the hopes of a Plato and Aristotle for the continued existence of our better part after the dissolution of the body ... if the modern way of thinking really did signify the elimination of the question of immortality, then this elimination would have to be called an extremely portentous one for psychology." Now one can say that in many people's view not only the scientific approach of

psychology but the scientific approach altogether seems to signify the elimination of such questions. Over Hegel's world view there *seems* to hover like an evil fate the fact that, with its affirmation of the supersensible nature of the thought-world, his world view has walled off the entrance into a real world of supersensible facts and beings. In someone who is a student of Hegel in the sense Karl Rosenkranz is, for example, this fate seems to work on. Rosenkranz wrote a psychology (*Psychology or Science of the Subjective Spirit*, 1837; third edition, 1863). There, in the chapter on "Old Age," one can read (p. 119): "Psychology touches here on the question of immortality, a favorite theme of lay philosophers — often with the preconceived intention of guaranteeing a reunion after death, as one usually expresses it. If the spirit, as a self-conscious idea-entity, is qualitatively different from its organism, then the *possibility* of immortality makes sense. But as to the *how* of actual immortality, we are unable to gain the slightest inkling with any objective value. We can see that if we continue to exist as individualities, our being is still unable to change, after all, with respect to having to live within the true, good, and beautiful; but the *modality* of an existence separated from our organism is a riddle for us. Why should we not then acknowledge here the *limits of our knowing*? Why should we either flatly deny the possibility of immortality or offer for speculation fantastic dreams of a soul sleep, of a soul body, and of other such dogmas? Where true knowing ceases, faith enters; and we must leave it up to faith to depict

a not impossible hereafter.” Rosenkranz airs an opinion like this within a psychology completely permeated with the conviction of having a knowledge about what the supersensible world-thought brings to earthly reality within the being of the human soul. This is a science — wishing to weave entirely within the supersensible — that comes to an immediate halt when it notices the threshold to the supersensible world. One can deal with this phenomenon only if one feels in it something of the destiny that is cast over man’s striving in knowledge — and that seems so inextricably interwoven with Hegel’s world view — through the fact that, by focussing with all its strength upon the supersensible nature of thinking, and, in order to achieve maximum effect with this focus, his world view loses the possibility of a different focus upon the supersensible.

Hegel at first seeks to find the circumference of all the supersensible thoughts that arise in the human soul when the soul lifts itself up out of all observation of nature and all earthly soul life. He presents this content as his *Logic*. But this logic contains not one single thought leading out of the region encompassed by nature and earthly soul life.

Then Hegel seeks further to present all those thoughts which, as supersensible beings, underlie nature. Nature becomes for him the revelation of a supersensible thought-world that hides its thought-being within nature and presents

itself as the opposite of itself, as something of a non-thought kind. But here also there are no thoughts that non-thought kind. But here also there are no thoughts that I do not express themselves within the circumference of the sense world.

In his philosophy of the spirit, Hegel depicts how world I ideas are holding sway in the individual human soul, in associations of human souls (peoples, states), in the historical evolution of mankind, in art, religion, and philosophy. Everywhere in his philosophy is also the view that the supersensible thought-world absolutely expresses itself within the soul element as this stands with its being and working within the sense world, and that therefore everything present in the sense realm is of a spiritual nature with respect to its true being. Nowhere, however, is there a start in the direction of penetrating with knowledge into a supersensible region for which no configuration in the sense realm is present.

One can acknowledge all this to oneself and yet not seek to judge the expression of German idealism in Hegel's world view *negatively* just because Hegel, in spite of his supersensible idealism, remained stuck in observation of the sense world. One can arrive at a *positive* judgment and can find the essential thing about this world view to lie in the fact that it contains the affirmation: Whoever observes in its true form the world spread out before our senses recognizes that it is in reality a spiritual world. And German idealism has

expressed through Hegel this affirmation of the spiritual nature of the sense-perceptible.

## **A Forgotten Stream in German Spiritual Life**

Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel appear in their full significance quite especially to someone who considers the far-reaching impetus they gave to personalities possessed of far less spiritual vigor than they. Something is moving and working in the souls of this trio of thinkers that could not come fully to expression within themselves. And what is working as the basic undertone in the souls of these thinkers works on in a living way in their successors and brings them to world views — in accordance with the spirit — that even the three great original thinkers themselves could not achieve because they had to exhaust their soul vigor, so to speak in making the first beginnings.

Thus, in Immanuel Hermann Fichte, the son of Johann Gottlieb Fichte, there appears a thinker who tries to penetrate more deeply into the spiritual than his father, Schelling, or Hegel. Whoever dares to make such an attempt will not only hear from outside the opposition of all those who are fearful about questions of world views; if he is a careful thinker, he will clearly perceive this opposition coming also from his own soul. Is there then actually a possibility of delivering the human soul of cognitive powers that lead into regions of which the senses give no view? What can guarantee the reality of such regions; what can determine the difference between such reality and the creations of fantasy and daydreaming? Whoever does not always have the spirit of this opposition at

his side, so to speak, as the true companion of his prudence will easily blunder in his spiritual-scientific attempts; whoever has this spirit will recognize in it something extremely valuable for life.

Whoever enters into the arguments of Immanuel Hermann Fichte will find that a certain spiritual demeanor has passed over to him from his great predecessors that both strengthens his steps into the spiritual region and endows him with prudence in the sense just indicated.

The standpoint of the Hegelian world view, which takes as its basic conviction the spiritual nature of the world of ideas, was also able to be the point of departure for Immanuel Hermann Fichte in the development of his thoughts. Nevertheless, he felt it to be a weakness in Hegel's world view that, from its supersensible vantage point, it still looks only at what is revealed in the sense world. Whoever lives into Immanuel Hermann Fichte's views can feel something like the following as its basic undertone. The soul experiences itself in a supersensible way when it lifts itself above sense perception to a weaving in the realm of ideas. Through this, the soul has not only enabled itself to see the sense world differently than the senses see it — which would correspond to the Hegelian world view — ; but also, the soul has an *experience of itself* through this that it cannot have through anything to be found within the sense world. From now on the soul knows of



something that itself is supersensible about the soul. This “something” cannot be merely the idea of the soul’s sense-perceptible body. Rather, this something must be a living, essential beingness that underlies the sense-perceptible body in such a way that this body is formed according to the idea of *this something*. Thus Immanuel Hermann Fichte is led up above and beyond the sense-perceptible body to a supersensible body, which, out of its life, forms the first body. Hegel advances from sense observation to thinking about sense observation. Fichte seeks in man the being that can *experience* thinking as something supersensible, Hegel, if he wants to see in thinking something supersensible, would have to ascribe to this thinking itself the ability to think. Fichte cannot go along with this. He has to say to himself: If one is not to regard the sense-perceptible body itself as the creator of thoughts, then one is compelled to assume that there is something supersensible above and beyond this body. Moved by this kind of a view, Fichte regards the human sense-perceptible body in a natural-scientific way (physiologically), and finds that such a study, if only it is unbiased enough, is compelled to take a supersensible body as the basis of the sense-perceptible one. In paragraphs 118 and 119 of his *Anthropology* (second edition 1860), he says about this: “Within the material elements, therefore, one cannot find what is truly enduring, that *unifying* form principle of the body which proves to be operative our whole life long.” “Thus we are directed toward a second, essentially *different* cause within

the body.” “Insofar as this [unifying form principle] contains what is actually enduring in metabolism, it is the *true, inner body-invisible*, yet *present* in all visible materiality. That other entity, the outer manifestation of this form principle, shaped by continuous metabolism: let us call it ‘corporality’ from now on; it is truly not enduring and not whole; it is the mere effect or copy of that inner bodily nature that throws it into the changing world of matter in somewhat the same way a magnetic force puts together, out of metal filing dust, a seemingly dense body that is then blown away in all directions when the uniting force is withdrawn.” This opens for Fichte the perspective of getting outside the sense world, in which man works between birth and death, into a supersensible world with which he is connected through his invisible body in the same way he is connected with the sense world through his visible body. For, his knowledge of this invisible body brings him to the view he expresses in these words: “For one hardly need ask here how the human being, in and for himself, conducts himself in this process of death. Man, in and for himself — even after the last, to us invisible, act of his life processes — remains, in his *essential being*, completely the same one he was before with respect to his *spirit and power of organization*. His integrity is preserved; for he has lost absolutely nothing of what was his and belonged to his substance during his visible life. He only returns in death into the invisible world; or rather, since he has never left the invisible world, since the invisible world is what actually *endures* within everything visible, he has only

stripped off a particular form of visibility. 'To be dead' simply means to remain no longer perceptible to ordinary sense apprehension, in exactly the same way that what is actually real, the ultimate foundations of bodily phenomena, are also imperceptible to the senses." And with such a thought Fichte feels himself to be standing so surely in the supersensible world that he can say: "With this concept of the continued existence of the soul, therefore, we not only transcend outer experience and reach into an unknown region of merely illusory existences; we also find ourselves, with this concept, right in the midst of the graspable reality accessible to thinking. To assert the opposite, that the soul ceases to exist, would be against nature, would contradict all analogy to outer experience. The soul that has 'died,' i.e., has become invisible to the senses, continues to exist no less than before, and is unremoved from its original life conditions. ... Another means of incarnation need only present itself to the soul's power of organization for the soul to stand there again in *new bodily activity* ..." (Paragraphs 133 *Anthropology*)

Starting from such views there opens up for Immanuel Hermann Fichte the possibility of a self-knowledge that man attains when he observes himself from the point of view he gains through his experiences in his own supersensible entity. Man's sense-perceptible entity brings him to the point of thinking. But in thinking, after all, he grasps himself as a supersensible being, If he lifts mere thinking up into an inner

*experiencing* — through which it is no longer mere thinking but rather a supersensible beholding, — he then gains a way of knowing through which he no longer looks only upon what is sense-perceptible, but also upon what is supersensible. If anthropology is the science of the human being by which he studies the part of himself to be found in the sense world, then, through his view of the supersensible, another science makes it appearance, about which Immanuel Hermann Fichte expresses himself in this way (paragraph 270): to “... *anthropology* ends up with the conclusion, established from the most varied sides, that man, in accordance with the true nature of his *being*, as though in the actual source of his *consciousness*, belongs to a supersensible world. Man’s sense consciousness, on the other hand, and the phenomenal world (world of appearances) arising at the point of his eye, along with the whole life of the senses, including human senses: all this has no significance other than merely being the place in which that supersensible life of the human spirit occurs through the fact that the human spirit, by its *own, free, conscious activity*, leads the spiritual content of ideas from the beyond into the sense world ...” This fundamental apprehension of man’s being now lifts “anthropology” in its final conclusions up to “anthroposophy.”

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Through Immanuel Hermann Fichte the cognitive impulse

manifesting in the idealism of German world views is brought to the point of undertaking the first of those steps which can lead human insight to a science of the spiritual world. Many other thinkers strove like Immanuel Hermann Fichte to carry further the ideas of their predecessors: Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. For, this German idealism points to the germinal power for a real development of those cognitive powers of man that behold the supersensible spiritual the way our senses behold the sense-perceptible material. Let us just look at several of these thinkers. One can see how fruitful the spiritual stream of German idealism proves to be in this direction if one does not refer merely to those thinkers who are discussed in the usual textbooks on the history of philosophy, but also to those whose spiritual work was enclosed within narrower boundaries. For example, there are the *Little Writings* (published 1869 in Leipzig) of Johann Heinrich Deinhardt, who died in Bromberg on August 16, 1867 as headmaster of a secondary school. His book contains essays on “the antithesis between pantheism and deism in pre-Christian religions,” on the “concept of religion,” on “Kepler, his life and character,” etc. The basic undertone of these treatises is altogether of a sort to show how the thought-life of their author is rooted in the idealism of German world views. One of these essays speaks about the “reasonable grounds for believing in the immortality of the human soul.” This essay defends immortality at first only with reasons that spring from our ordinary thinking. But at the end,

the following significant note is added by the publisher:

“According to a letter of August 14, 1866 to his publishers, the author intended to expand this essay for the complete edition of his collected ‘Little Writings’ with an observation about the new body that the soul is working to develop for itself already in this life. The author’s death the following year prevented the carrying out of this plan.” How a remark like this spotlights the effect upon thinkers of the idealism of German world views, stimulating them to penetrate in a scientific way into the spiritual realm! How many such attempts a person would discover today, even by investigating only those thinkers still to be found in literature! How many there must be that bore no fruit in literature but a great deal in life! One is looking there really, in the scientific consciousness ruling in our day, at a more or less forgotten stream in German spiritual life.

One of those thinkers, hardly ever heard of today, is Ignaz Paul Vitalis Troxler. Let us mention only one of his numerous books, *Lectures on Philosophy*, published in 1835. A personality is expressing himself in this book who is absolutely conscious of how a person using merely his senses and the intellect that deals with the observations of his senses can know only a part of the world. Like Immanuel Hermann Fichte, Troxler also feels himself in his thinking to be standing within a supersensible world. But he also senses how the human being, when he removes himself from the power that binds him to the senses, can do more than place

himself before a world that in the Hegelian sense is *thought* by him; through this removal he can experience within his inner being the blossoming of a purely spiritual means of knowledge through which he spiritually beholds a spiritual world, like the senses behold the sense world in sense perception. Troxler speaks of a “supra-spiritual sense:” And one can form a picture of what he means by this in the following way. The human being observes the things of the world through his senses. He thereby receives sense-perceptible pictures of these things. He then thinks about these pictures. Thoughts reveal themselves to him thereby that no longer bear the sensible pictorial element in themselves. Through the power of his spirit, therefore, man adds supersensible thoughts to the sense-perceptible pictures. If he now experiences himself in the entity that is thinking in him, in such a way that he ascends above mere thinking to spiritual experiencing, then, from out of this experiencing, an inner, purely spiritual power of picture making takes hold of him. He then beholds a world in pictures that can serve as a form of revelation for a supersensibly experienced reality. These pictures are not received by the senses; but they are full of life, just as sense-perceptible pictures are; they are not dreamed up; they are experiences in the supersensible world held fast by the soul in picture form. In ordinary cognitive activity, the sense-perceptible picture is present first and then, in the process of knowledge, the thought comes to join it — the thought, which is not a

picture for the senses. In the spiritual process of knowledge, the supersensible experience is present; this experience as such could not be beheld if it did not, through a power in accordance with the nature of the spirit, pour itself into the picture that brings this power to spiritually perceptible embodiment. For Troxler, the cognitive activity of the “supra-spiritual sense” is of just such a kind. And the pictures of this supra-spiritual sense are grasped by the “supersensible spirit” of man in the same way that sense-perceptible pictures are grasped by human reason in knowledge of the sense world. In the working together of the supersensible spirit with the supra-spiritual sense, there evolved, in Troxler’s view, our knowing of the spirit (see the sixth of his *Lectures on Philosophy*).

Taking his start from such presuppositions, Troxler has an inkling of a “higher man” within the man that experiences himself in the sense world; this “higher man” underlies the sense-perceptible man and belongs to the supersensible world; and in this view Troxler feels himself to be in harmony with what Friedrich Schlegel expressed. And thus, as was already the case earlier with Friedrich Schlegel, the highest qualities and activities manifested by the human being in the sense world become for Troxler the expression of what the supersensible human being can do. Through the fact that man stands within the sense world, his soul is possessed of the power of belief. But this power after all is only the manifestation, through the sense-perceptible body, of the



supersensible soul. In the supersensible realm a certain faculty of the soul underlies our power of belief; if one wants to express it in a supersensibly pictorial way, one must call this a faculty of the supersensible man to hear. And it is the same with our power of hope. A faculty of the supersensible man to see underlies this power; corresponding with our activity of love, there is the faculty of the “higher man” to feel, to “touch,” in spirit, just as the sense of touch in the sense-perceptible world is the faculty to feel something. Troxler expresses himself on this subject (page 107 of his *Lectures on Philosophy*, Bern, 1835) in the following way: “Our departed friend Friedrich Schlegel has brought to light in a very beautiful and true way the relationship of the sense-perceptible to the spiritual man. In his lectures on the philosophy of language and the word, Schlegel says: ‘If one wants — in that alphabet of consciousness which provides the individual elements for the individual syllables and whole words — to refind the first beginnings of our higher consciousness, after God Himself constitutes the keystone of highest consciousness, then the *feeling for the spirit* must be accepted as the living center of our whole consciousness and as the point of union with the higher consciousness ... One is often used to calling these fundamental feelings for the eternal: ‘belief, hope, and love.’ If one is to regard these three fundamental feelings or characteristics or states of consciousness as just so many organs of knowledge and perception of the divine — or, if you will, at least organs that

give inklings of the divine, — then one can very well compare them to the outer senses and instruments of sense perception, both in the above respect and in the characteristic form of apprehension that each of them has, Then love corresponds in a striking way — in the first stimulating soul touch, in the continuous attraction, and in the final perfect union — to the outer sense of touch; belief is the inner hearing of the spirit, uniting the given word to its higher message, grasping it, and inwardly preserving it; and hope is the eye, whose light can glimpse already in the distance the objects it craves deeply and longingly.” That Troxler himself now goes above and beyond the meaning Schlegel gave these words and thinks them absolutely in the sense indicated above is shown by the words Troxler now adds: “Far loftier than intellect and will, and their interaction, far loftier than reason and spiritual activity (*Freiheit*), and their unity, are these *ideas of our deeper heart* (*Gerrütsideen*) that unite in a consciousness of spirit and of heart; and just as intellect and will, reason and spiritual activity — and all the soul capacities and abilities of a lower sort than they — represent an earthward directed reflection, so these three are a heavenward directed consciousness that is illuminated by a truly divine light.” The same thing is shown by the fact that Troxler also expresses himself about the supersensible soul body in exactly the same way one encounters in Immanuel Hermann Fichte: “Earlier philosophers have already distinguished a fine and noble soul body from the coarser

body ... a soul that had about itself a picture of the body that they called a schema and that was for them the inner, higher man. ... In modern times even Kant, in *The Dreams of a Spirit Seer*, dreams up seriously as a joke a completely inward soul man that bears all the members of its outer man upon his spiritual body; Lavater also writes and thinks in this way; and even when Jean Paul jokes about Bonet's slip and Platner's soul girdle, which are supposed to be hidden inside the coarser outside skirt and martyr's smock, we also hear him asking again, after all: 'to what end and from where were these extraordinary potentials and wishes laid in us, which, bare as swallowed diamonds, slowly cut our earthly covering to pieces? ... Within the stony members (of man) there grow and mature his living members according to a way of living unknown to us.' We could," Troxler continues, "present innumerable further examples of similar ways of thinking and writing that ultimately are only various views and pictures in which ... the one true teaching is contained of the individuality and immortality of man."

Troxler too speaks of the fact that upon the path of knowledge sought by him a science of man is possible through which — to use his own expressions — the "supra-spiritual sense" together with the "supersensible spirit" apprehend the supersensible being of man in an "anthroposophy," On page 101 of his *Lectures* there is the sentence: "While it is now highly encouraging that modern

philosophy, which ... must reveal itself ... in any anthroposophy, is winding its way upward, still one must not overlook the fact that this idea cannot be the fruit of speculation, and that the true individuality of man must not be confused either with what philosophy sets up as subjective spirit or as finite 'I,' nor with what philosophy lets this 'I' be confronted by as absolute spirit or absolute personality."

There is no doubt that Troxler sought the way out of and beyond Hegel's thought-world more in dim feeling than in clear perception. One can nevertheless observe in his cognitive life how the stimulus of the idealism in the German world views of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel works in a personality who cannot make the views of this trio of thinkers into his own, but who finds his own way through the fact that he receives this stimulus.

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Karl Christian Planck belongs to those personalities in the evolution of German spiritual life who are forgotten now and were disregarded even during their own lifetimes. He was born in 1819 in Stuttgart and died in 1880; he was a professor in a secondary school in Ulm and later in a college in Blaubeuren. In 1877 he still hoped to be given the professorship in philosophy that became free then in Tübingen. This did not happen. In a series of writings he

seeks to draw near to the world view that seems to him to express the spiritual approach of the German people. In his book *Outline of a Science of Nature* (1864) he states how he wants, in his own thoughts, to present the thoughts of the questing German folk soul: “The author is fully aware of the power of the deep-rooted preconceptions from past views that confront his book; nevertheless, just as the work itself has fought through to completion and into public view — in spite of all the adverse conditions confronting a work of *this* kind as a result of the whole situation and professional position of its author — so he is also certain that what must now fight for recognition will one day appear as the simplest and most obvious truth, and that through this, not merely *its* concerns but also the truly *German* view of things will triumph over any still unworthily external and un-German grasp of nature and spirit. — What, in unconscious profound inklings, has already been prefigured in our medieval literature will finally be fulfilled by our nation in the fullness of time. Impractical, afflicted by injury and scorn, the inwardness of the German spirit (as Wolfram von Eschenbach portrayed this inwardness in his Parzival), in the power of its ceaseless striving, finally attains the highest; this inwardness beholds the ultimate simple laws of the things of this world and of human existence itself, in their very foundations; and what literature has allegorized in a fanciful medieval way as the wonders of the grail, whose rulership its hero attains, receives, on the other hand, its purely natural fulfillment and reality in a lasting knowledge of

nature and of the spirit itself.”

In the last period of his life Karl Christian Planck drew his thought-world together in a book published by the philosopher Karl Köstlin in 1881 under the title *Testament of a German*.

One can absolutely perceive in Planck's soul a similar kind of feeling for the riddle of knowledge as that revealed in the other thinker personalities characterized in this book. This riddle in its original form becomes for Planck the point of departure for his investigations. Within the circumference of the human thought-world can the strength be found by which man can apprehend true reality, *the* reality that gives his existence sense and meaning within world existence? Man sees himself placed into and over against nature. He can certainly form thoughts about what rules in nature's depths as powers of true being; but where is his guarantee that his thoughts have any significance at all other than that they are creations of his own soul, without kinship to those depths? If his thoughts were like this, then it would in fact remain unknown to man what he himself is and how he is rooted in the true world. Planck was just as far as Hegel from wanting to approach the world depths through any soul force other than thinking. He could hold no other view than that genuine reality must yield itself somehow to thinking. But no matter how far one reaches out with thinking, no matter how one seeks to strengthen its inner power: one still remains always

only in thinking; in all the widths and depths of thinking one does not encounter *being* (*Sein*). By virtue of its own nature, thinking seems to exclude itself from any communion with being. Nevertheless, this insight into thinking's alienation from being now becomes for Planck precisely the ray of light that falls upon the world riddle and solves it. If thinking makes absolutely no claim of bearing within itself anything at all in the way of reality, if it actually is true that thinking reveals itself to be something unreal, then precisely through this fact it proves itself to be an instrument for expressing reality. If it were itself something real, then the soul could weave only in *its* reality, and could not leave it again; if thinking itself is unreal, then it will not disturb the soul through any reality of its own; by thinking, man is absolutely not within any thought-reality; he is within a thought-unreality that precisely therefore does not force itself upon him with its own reality but rather expresses that reality of which it speaks. Whoever sees in thinking itself something real must, in Planck's view, give up hope of arriving at reality; since, for him, thinking must place itself between the soul and reality. If thinking itself is *nothing*, it can therefore also not conceal reality from our activity of knowing; then reality must be able to reveal itself in thinking.

With this view Planck has, to begin with, attained only the starting point for his world view. For, in the thought-weaving immediately present in the soul during life, that thinking is by no means operative which is pure, self-renouncing, and even

*self-denying*, There play into this ordinary thought weaving what lives in the mental picturing, feeling, willing, and wanting of the soul. Because this is so, the clouding of world views occurs. And Planck's striving is to attain a kind of world view in which everything it contains is the result of thinking, yet nothing stems from thinking itself, In everything that is made into a thought about the real world, one must look at what lives in thinking but without itself being thought by us, Planck paints his picture of the world with a thinking that gives itself up in order to allow the world to shine from it.

As an example of the way Planck wants to arrive at a picture of the world through such striving, let us characterize with a few strokes how he thinks about the being of the earth.

If someone pictures the earth in the way advocated by purely physical geology, then, for Planck's world view, there is no truth in this picture. To picture the earth in this way would be the same as speaking of a tree and fixing one's gaze only upon the trunk, without its leaves, blossoms, and fruit. To the sight of our physical eyes, such a tree trunk can be called reality. But in a higher sense it is no reality. For, as a mere trunk, it cannot occur as such anywhere in our world. It can be what it is only in so far as those growth forces arise in it at the same time which unfold the leaves, blossoms, and fruits. In the reality of the trunk one must think these forces in addition and must be aware that the bare trunk gives a picture of



reality deceiving to the beholder, The fact that something or other is present to the senses is not yet proof that in this form it is also a reality, The earth, pictured as the totality of what it manifests in mineral configurations and in the facts occurring within these configurations, is no reality, Whoever wants to picture something real about the earth must picture it in such a way that its mineral realm already contains within itself the plant realm, Just as the trunk configuration of the tree includes its leaves and blossoms; yes, that within the “true earth” the animal realm and man are already present along with it. But do not say that all this is obvious and that Planck, basically, is only deceiving himself in thinking that not everyone sees it this way. Planck would have to reply to this: Where is the person who sees it this way? Certainly, everyone pictures the earth as a planetary body with plants, animals, and man. But they in fact picture the mineral earth, constituted of geological layers, with plants growing out of its surface, and with animals and human beings moving around on it. But this earth as a sum, added up out of minerals, plants. animals, and human beings, does not exist at all. It is only a delusion of the senses. On the other hand there is a true earth; it is a completely supersensible configuration, an invisible being, which provides the mineral foundation from out of itself; but it is not limited to this, for it manifests itself further in the plant realm, then in the animal realm, then in the human realm. Only that person has the right eye for the mineral, plant, animal, and human realm who beholds the

entirety of the earth in its supersensible nature, and who feels, for example, how the picture of the material mineral realm by itself, without the picture of the soul evolution of mankind, is a delusion. Certainly, one can picture a material mineral realm to oneself; but one is living in a world-lie and not in the world-truth if, in doing so, one does not have the feeling that with a mental picture like this, one is caught in the same madness as a person who wanted to think that a man whose head has been struck off would calmly go on with his life.

It might be said: If true knowledge necessitates what is indicated here, then such knowledge, after all, could never be achieved; for, whoever asserts that the mineral earth is no reality because it must be viewed within the entirety of the earth should say too that the entirety of the earth must be viewed in the plant system and so on. Whoever raises this objection, however, has not grasped the significance of what underlies a world view that is in accordance with the spirit. In all human activity of knowing, in fact, the issue is not merely that one think correctly, but also that one think *in accordance with reality*. In speaking of a painting one can certainly say that one is not thinking in accordance with reality if one looks only at one person when there are three in the painting; but this assertion, *within its rightful scope*, cannot be refuted by the statement: No one understands this painting who also does not know all the preceding paintings of the same artist. A thinking both *correct* and *in accordance with reality* is in fact

necessary for knowing reality. To consider, on their own, a mineral as a mineral, a plant as a plant, etc., can be in accordance with reality; the mineral earth is not a real configuration, however; it is a configuration of our imagination, even when one is aware of the fact that the mineral earth is only a part of everything earthly.

That is what is significant about a personality like Planck: he attains an inner state in which he does not reflect upon but rather *experiences* the truth of a thought; he unfolds a special power in his own soul by which to experience when not to think a particular thought because, through its own nature, it kills itself. To grasp the existence of a reality that bears within itself its own life and its own death, this belongs to the kind of soul attitude that does not depend upon the sense world to tell it: this is or this is not.

From this point of view Planck sought in thinking to grasp what lives in natural phenomena and in human existence in historical, artistic, and judicial life. In a brilliant book, he wrote on the *Truth and Banality of Darwinism*. He calls this work a “monument to the history of modern (1872) German science.” There are people who experience a personality like Planck as hovering in unworldly conceptual heights and lacking a sense for practical life. Practical life requires people who develop healthy judgment based on “real” life, as they call it. Now, with respect to this way of experiencing Planck, one can also hold

the opinion: Many things would be different in real life if this easy-going view of life and of living life were less widespread in reality, and if on the other hand the opinion could grow somewhat that thinkers like Planck — because they acquire for themselves an attitude of soul through which they unite themselves with true reality — also have a truer judgment about the relationships of life than the people who call them “dreamers in concepts” (*Begriffsschwärmer*) and impractical philosophers. The opinion is also possible that those dullards who are averse to such supposed “dreaming in concepts” and who think themselves so very practical in life are losing their sense for the true relationships of life, whereas the impractical philosophers are developing it to the point that it can lead them right to their goal. One can arrive at such an opinion when one considers Planck and sees in him, combined with the acme of philosophical development of ideas, a far-sighted accurate judgment about the needs of a genuine conduct of life and about the events of outer life. Even if one holds a different view about much of what Planck has developed in the way of ideas about shaping outer life — which is also the case with the present writer, — still one can acknowledge that his views can provide, precisely in this area, a *sound starting point in life* for solving practical problems; even if in proceeding from there one arrives at something entirely different from one’s starting point. And one should assert: People who are “dreamers in concepts” in this way and who, precisely because of this, can see what powers are at work in

real life are more competent to meet the needs of this real life than many a person who believes himself to be imbued with practical skill precisely through the fact that, in his view, he has not let contact with any world of ideas “make him stupid.” (In his book, *Nineteenth Century Views of the World and of Life*, published in 1900, the present author has written about Karl Christian Planck’s place in the evolution of modern world views. This book was published in a new edition in 1914 under the title *Riddles of Philosophy*.)

Someone might maintain that it is unjustified to regard Planck’s thoughts as significant for the motive forces of the German people since these thoughts have not become widespread. Such an opinion misses the point when speaking about the influence of the being of a people upon the views of a thinker from that people. What is working there are the impersonal (of ten unconscious) powers of a people, living in their activities in the most varied realms of existence and shaping the ideas of a thinker like Planck. These powers were there *before* he appeared and will work on *afterward*; they *live*, even if they are not spoken of; they live, even if they are not recognized. And it can be the case that they work in a particularly strong way in an indigenous thinker like this, who is not spoken of, because less of what these powers contain streams into the opinions held *about* him than *into* his thoughts. A thinker like this can of ten stand there alone, and not only during his lifetime; even his thoughts can stand there

alone in the opinion of posterity. But if one has apprehended the particular nature of his thoughts, then one has recognized an essential trait of the folk soul, a trait that has become a thought in him and will remain imperishably in his people, ready to reveal itself in ever new impulses. Independent of the question: What effectiveness was granted to his work? is the other question: What worked in him and will lead again and again to accomplishments in the same direction? The *Testament of a German* by Karl Christian Planck was republished in a second edition in 1912. It is a pity that many of those who were philosophically minded and fond of writing at that time mustered up more enthusiasm for the thoughts in Henri Bergson's world view — lightly woven and therefore more easily comprehensible to undemanding souls — than for the rigorously interrelated and far-reaching ideas of Planck. How much has indeed been written about the “new configurating” of world views by Bergson: written, particularly, by those who discover the newness of a world view so easily because they lack understanding, and of ten even knowledge, of what has already been there for a long time. Relative to the “newness” of one of Bergson's main ideas the present author has pointed in his book *Riddles of Philosophy* to the following significant situation. (And it should be mentioned, by the way, that this indication was written before the present war. See the foreword to the second volume of the above book.)

Bergson is led by his thoughts to a transformation of the

widespread idea of the evolution of organic entities. He does not set at the beginning of this evolution the simplest organism and then think that, due to outer forces, more complicated organisms emerge from it all the way up to man; he pictures that, at the starting point of evolution, there stands a being that in some form or other already contains the impulse to become man. This being, however, can bring this impulse to realization only by first expelling from itself other impulses that also lie within it. By expelling the lower organisms, this being gains the strength to realize the higher ones. Thus man, in his actual being, is not what arose last, but rather what was at work first, before everything else. He first expels the other entities from his formative powers in order to gain by this preliminary work the strength to come forth himself into outer sense-perceptible reality. Of course many will object: But numbers of people have already thought that an inner evolutionary drive was working in the evolution of organisms. And one can refer to the long-present thought of purposefulness, or to views held by natural scientists like Nageli and others. But such objections do not pertain in a case like this one. For, with Bergson's thought it is not a matter of starting from the general idea of an inner evolutionary force, but rather from a specific mental picture of what man is in his full scope; and of seeing from this picture that this man, thought of as supersensible, has impulses within him to first set the other beings of nature into sense-perceptible reality and then also to place himself into this

reality.

Now this is the point. What can be read in Bergson in a scintillating lightly draped configuration of ideas had already been expressed *before that* by the German thinker Wilhelm Heinrich Preuss in a powerful and strongly thought-through way. Preuss is also one of those personalities belonging to the presentation here of a more or less forgotten stream in the development of German world views that are in accordance with the spirit. With a powerful sense for reality, Preuss brings together natural-scientific views and world views — in his book *Spirit and Matter* (1882), for example. One finds the Bergsonian thought we cited expressed by Preuss in the following way: “It should ... be time ... to present a teaching about the origins of organic species that is founded not only upon principles set up in a one-sided way by descriptive natural science, but that is also in full harmony with the rest of natural laws (which are also the laws of human thinking). This teaching should also be *free of any hypothesizing* and should rest only upon rigorous conclusions drawn from scientific observation in the broadest sense. This teaching should rescue the concept of species as much as is factually possible, but at the same time should take Darwin’s concept of evolution into its domain and seek to make it fruitful. — The center of this new teaching is man, *the species that recurs only once on our planet: homo sapiens*. Strange that older observers started with objects of nature and then erred to



such an extent that they did not find the path to man, in which effort even Darwin Indeed succeeded only in a most pitiful and utterly unsatisfying way by seeking the ancestor of the lord of creation among the animals. Actually, the natural scientist would have to start with himself as a human being and then, continuing on *through the whole realm of existence and of thinking return to mankind* ... It was not by chance that human nature arose out of earthly nature; It was by necessity. Man is the goal of tellurian processes, and every other form arising besides him has borrowed its traits from his. Man is the first-born being of the whole cosmos. ... When the germs of his being had arisen, the remaining organic element no longer had the necessary strength to engender further human germs. What arose then was animal or plant. ...”

The idea, as it lives in the philosophy of German idealism’s picture of the being of man, also shines forth from the mental pictures of this little-known thinker of Elsfleth, Wilhelm Heinrich Preuss. Out of this view he knows how to make Darwinism — insofar as Darwinism looks only at the evolution occurring in the sense world — into a part of a world view that is in accordance with the spirit and that wishes to know the being of man in its development out of the depths of the world-all. As to how Bergson arrived at his thoughts — so glittering in his depletion, but so powerfully shining in Preuss’s — let us emphasize that less here than the fact that in the writings of the little-known Preuss the most fruitful seeds can

be found, able to give many a person a stronger impetus than that to be found in Bergson's glittering version of these same thoughts. To be sure, one must also meet Preuss with more ability to deepen one's thinking than was shown by those who waxed so enthusiastic about the "new life" instilled in our world view by Bergson. What is being said here about Bergson and Preuss has absolutely nothing to do with national sympathies and antipathies.

Recently, H. Bönke has investigated Bergson's "original new philosophical creation," because Bergson has found it necessary in these fateful times to speak such hate-filled words and to shower such contempt upon German spiritual life (see Bönke's writing: *Plagiarizer Bergson, Membre de l'Institut. Answer to the Disparagements of German Science by Edmond Perrier, President de l'Academie des Sciences*. Charlottenburg, Huth, 1915). When one considers all that Bönke presents about the way Bergson reproduces what he has gotten from German thought-life, the statements will not seem exaggerated that the philosopher Wundt makes in the "Central Literary Paper of Germany," number 46, of November 13, 1915: "... Bönke shows no lack ... of incriminating material. The greater part of his book consists of passages, taken from Bergson's and Schopenhauer's works, in which the younger author repeats the thoughts of the older, either verbatim or with slight variation. Even so, this alone is not the decisive point. Therefore, let us be a little bit clearer

and more critical in ordering the examples advanced by Bönke. They then fall definitely into three categories. The first contains sentences from both authors that, except for minor differences, coincide exactly. ...” In the other categories the coincidence lies more in the way their thoughts are formed.

Now it is perhaps really not so important to show how much Bergson, who condemns German spiritual life so furiously, reveals himself to be a right willing proponent of this German spiritual life; more important is the fact that Bergson propounds this spiritual life in lightly woven, easily attainable reflections, and that many a critic would have done better to wait with his enthusiastic proclaiming of this “new enlivener” of world views until, through better understanding of those thinkers to whom Bergson owes his stimulus, the critic might have refrained from his proclamation.

That a person be stimulated by his predecessors is a natural thing in the evolution of mankind; what matters, however, is whether the stimulus leads to a process of further development or — and Bönke’s presentation also makes this quite clear — leads to a process of regression as in Bergson’s case.

### A Side Glance

In 1912 *The Lofty Goal of Knowledge* by Omar al Raschid Bey was published in Munich. (Please note: The author is not

Turkish; he is German; and the view he advocates has nothing to do with Mohammedanism, but is an ancient Indian world view appearing in modern dress.) The book appeared after the author's death. If the author had had the wish to produce in his soul the requirements needed for understanding the series of thinkers depicted in this present book, a book like his would not have appeared in our age, and its author would not have believed he should show to himself and others, by what he said in his book, a path of knowledge appropriate to the present day. But because of the way things appear to him, the author of *The Lofty Goal* could have only a pitying smile for the assertion just made here. He would not see that everything he presents to our soul experience in his final chapter "Awakening out of Appearances" on the basis of what preceded this chapter and with this chapter, was, in fact, a correct path of knowledge for the ancient Indian. One can understand this path completely as one belonging to the past. The author would not see that this path of knowledge, however, leads into another path if one does not stop prematurely on the first, but rather travels on upon the path of reality in accordance with the spirit as modern idealism has done.

The author would have to have recognized that his "Awakening out of Appearances" is only an apparent awakening; actually it is a drawing back of oneself — effected by one's own soul experiences — from the appearances, a

kind of quaking when faced by the appearances, and therefore not an “awakening out of appearances,” but rather a falling asleep into delusion — a self-delusion that considers its world of delusion to be reality because it cannot get to the point of taking the path into a reality in accordance with the spirit. Planck’s self-denying thinking is a soul experience into which al Raschid’s deluded thinking cannot penetrate. In *The Lofty Goal* there is the statement: “Whoever seeks his salvation in this world has fallen prey to this world and remains so; for him there is no escape from unstilled desire; for him there is no escape from vain play; for him there is no escape from the tight fetters of the ‘I’. Whoever does not lift himself out of this world lives and dies with his world.” Before these sentences stand these: “Whoever seeks his salvation in the ‘I,’ for him egoism (*Selbstsucht*) is a commandment, for him egoism is God.” But whoever recognizes in a living way the motive soul forces that hold sway in the series of thinkers from Fichte up to Planck will see through the deception manifesting in these statements from *The Lofty Goal*. For he recognizes how the obsession (*Sucht*) with oneself — egoism — lies *before* the experience of the “I” in Fichte’s sense, and how a fleeing from an acknowledgment of the “I” — in an ancient Indian sense — *seemingly* leads arrogant cognitive striving farther into the spiritual world, but actually *throws one back* into obsession with one’s “I.” For only the finding of the “I” lets the “I” escape the fetters of obsession with the “I,” the fetters of egoism. The point, in fact, really is whether, in

“awakening out of appearances,” one has experiences of *The Lofty Goal* that are produced by a falling back into an obsession with one’s “I,” or whether one has the kind of experiences to which the following words can point. Whoever seeks his salvation in fleeing from the “I” falls prey to obsession with the “I”; whoever finds the “I” frees himself from obsession with the “I”; for, obsession with the “I” makes the “I” into its own idol; finding the “I” gives the “I” to the world.

Whoever seeks his salvation in fleeing from the world will be thrown back from the world into his own delusions; he is deluded by an arrogant illusion of knowledge, which lets a vain playing with ideas appear to him as world truth; he looses the fetters of the “I” in front and does not notice how, from behind, the enemy of knowledge binds them all the faster.

Whoever, scorning the phenomena of the world, wants to lift himself above the world leads himself into a delusion that holds him all the more securely because it reveals itself to him as wisdom; he leads himself into a delusion by which he holds himself and others back from the difficult awakening in the idealism of modern world views, and dreams into an

“awakening out of appearances,” A supposed awakening, like that which *The Lofty Goal* wishes to indicate, is indeed a source of that experience which ever and again makes the “awakened person” speak of the sublimity of his knowledge; but it is also a hindrance for the experiencing of this idealism in world views. Please do not take these remarks as a wish on the author’s part to disparage in any way al Raschid’s kind of

cognitive striving; what the present author is saying here is an objection that seems *necessary* for him to raise against a world view that seems to him to live in the worst possible self-delusion. Such an objection can certainly also be raised when one values, from a certain point of view, a manifestation of the spirit; it can seem most necessary precisely there, because that seriousness moves him to do so which must hold sway in dealing with questions of knowledge.

## **Pictures from the Thought-life of Austria**

The author would like to sketch several pictures — nothing other than that — and not *about* the spiritual thought-life of Austria but *only from* this life. No kind of completeness will be striven for, not even with respect to what the author himself has to say. Many other things might be much more important than what is to be brought here. But this time only a little bit will be indicated from the spiritual life of Austria that is more or less, directly or indirectly, connected in some way with spiritual streams in which the author himself has stood during his youth. Spiritual streams like those meant here can indeed also be characterized, not by presenting mental pictures one has formed of them, but by speaking of personalities, their way of thinking and inclinations of feeling, in whom one believes these streams to express themselves, as though symptomatically. I would like to depict what Austria reveals about itself through several such personalities. If I use the word “I” in several places, please consider that to be based on my point of view at that time.

I would like first of all to speak about a personality in whom I believe in myself able to see the manifestation in a very noble sense of spiritual Austrianness in the second half of the nineteenth century: Karl Julius Schröer. When I entered the Vienna College of Technology in 1879, he was professor of German literary history there. He first became my teacher and then an older friend. For many years now he has not been



among the living.

In the first lecture of his that I heard, he spoke about Goethe's *Götz van Berlichingen*. The whole age out of which this play grew, and also how Götz burst into this age became this play grew, and also how Götz burst into this age became alive in Schröer's words. A man was speaking who let flow into every one of his judgments what, out of the world view of German idealism, he had incorporated into all the feeling and willing of his entire spiritualized personality. His following lectures built up a living picture of German poetry since Goethe's appearance on the scene. They did so in such a way that through his depiction of poets and poems one always felt the living weaving of views, within the essential being of the German people, struggling to come into reality. Enthusiasm for the ideals of mankind carried Schröer's judgments along, and this enthusiasm implanted a living sense of self into the view of life that took its start in Goethe's age. A spirit spoke out of this man that wanted to communicate only what had become the deepest experience of his own soul during his observations of man's spiritual life.

Many of the people who got to know this personality did *not* know him. When I was already living in Germany, I was once at a dinner party, a well-known literary historian was sitting beside me. He spoke of a German duchess, whom he praised highly, except that — according to him — she could

sometimes err in her otherwise healthy judgment as, for example, when she “considered Schröer to be a significant person.” I can understand that many a person does not find in Schröer’s books what many of his students found through the living influence of his personality; but I am convinced that one could also sense much of this in Schröer’s writings if one were able to receive an impression not merely by so-called “rigorous methods” or even by such a method in the style of one or another school of literature, but rather by originality in judging, by the revelations of a view one has experienced oneself. Seen this way, a personality grown mature in the idealism of German world views does in fact speak forth from the much maligned book of Schröer, *History of German Poetry in the Nineteenth Century* and from others of his works. A certain manner of presentation, in his *Faust* commentaries, for example, could repel many a supposed free thinker. For there does work into Schröer’s presentation something that a certain age believed to be inseparable from the character of what is scientific. Even strong-minded thinkers fell under the yoke of this belief; and one must seek these thinkers themselves in their true nature by penetrating through this husk of their creations that was forced upon them by this yoke.

Karl Julius Schröer lived his boyhood and youth in the light of a man who, like himself, had his roots in spiritual German Austrianness, and who was one of its blossoms: his father,

Tobias Gottfried Schröer.

It was not so long ago that in the widest circles certain books were known to which many people certainly owed the awakening of a feeling, supported by a view of life in accordance with the spirit, for history, poetry, and art. These books are *Letters on Aesthetics' Chief Objects of Study*, by Chr. Oeser, *The Little Greeks*, by Chr. Oeser, *World History for Girls' Schools*, and other works by the same author. Covering the most manifold areas of human spiritual life from the point of view of a writer for young people, a personality is speaking in these writings who grew up in the way of picturing things of the Goethean age of German spiritual development, and who sees the world with the eye of the soul educated in this way. The author of these books is Tobias Gottfried Schröer, who published them under the name Chr. Oeser. Now, nineteen years after the death of this man, in 1869, the German Schiller Foundation presented his widow with an honorary gift accompanied by a letter in which was stated: "The undersigned Board has heard with deepest regret that the wife of one of the most worthy German writers, of a man who always stood up for the national spirit with talent and with heart, is not living in circumstances appropriate to her status nor to the service tendered by her husband; and so this Board is only fulfilling the duty required of it by the spirit of its statutes when it makes every possible effort to mitigate somewhat the adversity of a hard destiny." Moved by this

decision of the Schiller Foundation, Karl Julius Schröder then wrote an article about his father in the Vienna New Free Press that made public what until then had been known only to a very small circle: that Tobias Gottfried Schröder was not only the author of the books of Chr. Oeser, but also a significant poet and writer of works that were true ornaments of Austrian spiritual life, and that he had remained unknown only because he could not use his own name due to the situation there regarding censorship. His comedy *The Bear*, for example, appeared in 1830. Karl von Holtei, the significant Silesian poet and actor speaks of it in a letter to the author right after its appearance: "As regards your comedy *The Bear*: it delighted me. If the conception, the disposition of characters, is entirely yours, then I wish you good luck with all my heart, for you will still write more beautiful plays." The playwright took all his material from the life of Ivan (the Fourth) Wasiliewitsch and all the characters except Ivan himself are freely created. A later drama, *The Life and Deeds of Emerick Tököly and his Comrades in Arms*, received warm acclaim, without anyone knowing who the author was. One could read of it in "Magazine for Literary Conversation" (October 25, 1839): "An historical picture of remarkable freshness ... Works offering such a breath of fresh air and with such decisive characters are true rarities in our day ... Each grouping is full of great charm because it is full of great truth; ... The author's *Tököly* is a Hungarian *Götz von Berlichingen* and only with it can this drama be compared... From a spirit like this author we can

expect anything, even the greatest.” This review is by W. v. Ludemann, who has written a *History of Architecture*, a *History of Painting*, *Walks in Rome*, stories and novellas, works that express sensitivity and great understanding for art.

Through his father’s spiritual approach the sun of idealism in German world views had already shone beforehand upon Karl Julius Schröer as he entered the universities of Leipzig, Halle, and Berlin at the end of the 1840s and there could still experience, through much that worked upon him, this idealism’s way of picturing things. When he returned to his homeland in 1846, he became director of the Seminar for German Literary History and Language in the Pressburg secondary school for girls that his father had founded in this city. In this position he unfolded an activity that essentially took this form: Through his striving Schröer sought to solve the problem of how to work best in the spiritual life of Austria if one finds the direction of one’s strivings already marked out by having received the motive forces of one’s own soul from German culture. In a *Text and Reading Book* (that appeared in 1853 and presents a “History of German Literature”), he spoke of this striving: “Seniors, law students, students of theology ... came together there (in the secondary school) ... I made every effort to present to a circle of listeners like this, in large perspectives, the *glory of the German people* in its evolution, to stimulate respect for German art and science, and where possible to bring my listeners closer to the

standpoint of modern science.” And Schröer describes how he understands his own Germanness like this: “From this standpoint there naturally disappeared from view the one-sided factional passions: one will listen to a Protestant or a Catholic, to a conservative or a subversive enthusiast, or to a zealot of German nationalism only insofar as through them humanity gains and the human race is elevated.” And I want to repeat these words, written almost seventy years ago, not in order to express what was right for a German in Austria at that time, nor even now. I only want to show the nature of one man in whom the German — Austrian spirit expressed itself in a particular way. To what extent this spirit endows the Austrian with the right kind of striving: on this question the adherents of the different parties and nations in Austria will also decide very differently. And in all this one must also remember that Schröer expressed himself in this as a young man still who had just returned from German universities. But the fact is significant that in the soul of this young man — and not for political purposes, but out of purely spiritual thoughts about how to view the world — a German Austrian consciousness formed for itself an ideal for the mission of Austria that Schröer expressed in these words: “If we pursue the comparison of Germany with ancient Greece, and of the Germanic with the Greek tribes, we find a great similarity between Austria and Macedonia. We see the beautiful task of Austria exemplified there: *to cast the seeds of Western culture out over the East.*”

Schröer later became professor in the University of Budapest and then school director in Vienna; finally, he worked for many years as a professor of German literary history in the Vienna College of Technology. These positions were for him only an outer covering, so to speak, for his significant activity within Austrian spiritual life. This activity begins with an investigation into the soul and linguistic expressions of the German-Austrian folk life. He wants to know what is working and living in the people, not as a dry, prosaic researcher but rather as someone who wants to discover the riddle of the folk soul in order to see what forces of mankind are struggling to come into existence in these souls. Near the Pressburg region, among the farmers, there were living at that time some old Christmas plays. They are performed every year around Christmas time. In handwritten form they are passed down from generation to generation. They show how in the people the birth of Christ, and what is connected with it, lives dramatically in pictures with depth of heart. Schröer collects such plays in a little volume and writes an introduction to them in which he depicts this revelation of the folk soul with most loving devotion, such that his presentation allows the reader to immerse himself in the way the people feel and view things. Out of the same spirit he then undertakes to present the German dialects of the Hungarian mountain regions, of the West-Hungarian Germans, and of the Gottscheer area in Krain. His purpose there is always to solve the riddle of the organism of a people; his findings really

give a picture of the life at work in the evolution of language and of the folk soul. And basically the thought is always hovering before him in all these endeavors of learning to know, from the motive forces of its peoples, what determines the life of Austria. A great deal, a very great deal, of the answer to the question, What weaves in the soul of Austria?, is to be found in Schröer's research into dialects.

But this spiritual work had yet another effect upon Schröer himself. It provided him with the basis for deep insights into the essential being of the human soul itself. These insights bore fruit when, as director of several schools, he could test how views about education and teaching take form in a thinker who has looked so deeply into the being of the heart of the people as he had through his research. And so he was able to publish a small work, *Questions about Teaching*, which in my view should be reckoned among the pearls of pedagogical literature. This little book deals brilliantly with the goals, methods, and nature of teaching. I believe that this little volume, completely unknown today, should be read by everyone who has anything to do with teaching within the German cultural realm. Although this book was written entirely for the situation in Austria. the indications there can apply to the whole German-speaking world. What one today might call outmoded about this book, published in 1876, is inconsiderable when compared with the way of picturing things that is alive in it. A way of picturing things like this,



attained on the basis of a rich experience of life, remains ever fruitful even though someone living later must apply it to new conditions. In the last decades of his life Schröder's spiritual work was turned almost entirely to immersing itself in Goethe's life's work and way of picturing things. In the introduction to his book *German Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*, he stated: "We in Austria want to go hand in hand with the spiritual life of the German empire." He regarded the world view of German idealism as the root of this spiritual life. And he expressed his adherence to this world view in the words: "The world-rejuvenating appearance of idealism in Germany, in an age of frivolity a hundred years ago, is the greatest phenomenon of modern history. Our intellect (*Verstand*) — focused only upon what is finite, not penetrating into the depths of essential being — and along with it the egoism focused upon satisfying sensual needs, suddenly retreated before the appearance of a spirit that rose above everything common." (See the introduction to Schröder's edition of *Faust*). Schröder saw in Goethe's Faust "the hero of *unconquerable idealism*. He is the ideal hero of the age in which the play arose. His contest with Mephistopheles expresses the struggle of the new spirit as the innermost being of the age; and that is why this play is so great: it lifts us onto a higher level."

Schröder declares his unreserved allegiance to German idealism as a world view. In his *History of German Poetry of*

*the Nineteenth Century* there stand the words with which he wants to characterize the thoughts in which the spirit of the German people expresses itself when it does this in the sense of its own primal being: "Within what is perceived experientially, determining factors are everywhere recognizable that are hidden behind what is finite, behind what can be known by experience. These factors must be called the 'undetermined' and must be felt everywhere to be what is constant in change, an eternal lawfulness, and as something infinite. The perceived infinite within the finite appears as idea; the ability to perceive the infinite appears as reason (Vernunft), in contrast to intellect, which remains stuck at what is surveyably finite and can perceive nothing beyond it." At the same time, in the way Schröer declares his allegiance to this idealism, everything is also at work that is vibrating in his soul, which senses in its own being the Austrian spiritual stream. And this gives his world-view-idealism its particular coloring. When a thought is expressed, there is given it a certain coloring that does not allow it to enter right away the realm described by Hegel as the realm of philosophical knowledge when he said, "The task of philosophy is to grasp what is; for, what is reasonable is real, and what is real is reasonable. When philosophy paints its gray on gray then a form of life has become old; the owl of Minerva begins to fly only when dusk is descending." (See my book *Riddles of Philosophy*, vol. I.) No, the Austrian, Schröer, does not want to see the world of thoughts gray on gray;

ideas should shine in a color that ever refreshes and rejuvenates our deeper heart. And what would have mattered much more to Schröer in this connection than thinking about the bird of evening was to think about the deeper human heart struggling for light, seeking in the world of ideas the sun of that realm in which our intellect, focused upon the finite and upon the sense world, should be feeling the extinguishing of its light.

\* \* \*

Herman Grimm, the gifted art historian, had nothing but good to say about the Austrian sculptor Heinrich Natter. In his essay on Natter, published in his *Fragments* (1900), one can also read what Grimm thought about Natter's relation to Austria. "When I meet Austrians, I am struck by their deep-rooted love for the soil of their particular fatherland and by their impulse to maintain spiritual community with all Germans. Let us think now of one such person, Ignaz Zingerles. Natter's statue of Walter von der Vogelweide owes its existence to the unceasing quiet work of Zingerles. He resembled the men of our earlier centuries through the fact that he was hardly conceivable outside the province of his immediate homeland. He was a figure with simple outlines, fashioned out of faithfulness and honesty as though out of blocks of stone. He was a Tyrolean, as though his mountains were the navel of the earth, an Austrian through and through,

and at the same time one of the best and noblest Germans. And Natter was also all these: a good German, Austrian, and Tyrolean.” And about the monument to Walter von der Vogelweide in Bozen Herman Grimm says: “In Natter, inwardness of German feeling was united with formative imagination, His Walter von der Vogelweide stands in Bozen as a triumphant picture of German art, towering up in the crest of the Tyrolean mountains at the border country of the fatherland, A manly solid figure.”

I often had to think of these words of Hennen Grimm when the memory came alive in me of the splendid figure of the Austrian poet Fercher von Steinwand, who died in 1902. He was “all these: a good German, Austrian, and Carinthian,” although one could hardly say of him that he was “inconceivable outside the province of his immediate homeland.” I learned to know him at the end of the 1880’s in Vienna and for a short time associated with him personally. He was sixty years old at the time: a true figure of light, even externally; an engaging warmth shone from his noble features, eloquent eyes, and expressive gestures; through tranquil clarity and self-possession, this soul of an older man still gave the effect of youthful freshness. And when one came to know this soul better, its particular nature and creations, one could see how a feeling life instilled by the Carinthian mountains united in this soul with a contemplative life in the power of the idealism in German world views. This

contemplation (*Sinnen*) was already entirely native to his soul as a poetic world of pictures; this contemplation pointed with this world of pictures into the depths of existence; it confronted world riddles artistically, without the originality of artistic creation paling thereby into thought-poetry; one can observe this kind of contemplation in the following lines from Fercher von Steinwand's *Chorus of Primal Dreams*:

Out of all regions  
Ever ascended,  
Wanders an ether in far-radiant arches;  
Travel the billows to  
Depths ever silent.

There with our all-seeing  
Will as their cargo,  
Wending their way through the fog go our ferries;  
Sail between wonderful  
Banks new arising.

There before all-warming  
Eyes of soft mildness  
Winding and turning we fashion our patterns  
Out all around dreaming  
Regions of star-fields.

There to misfortune we  
N'er are indebted,

There we constructed our fortresses hovering, And  
tribulations we  
Joyfully shattered.

He who would paint you with  
Most holy features,  
Highest abode of our contemplative urgings:  
Wait for the swiftest  
Servants of love!

The following verses seek to portray how the soul, in  
thinking-waking daydreams, lives in far-away starry worlds  
and in immediate reality; then the poet continues:

No matter what careful  
Powers accomplish,  
Only on dreaming's own wide-spreading pinions  
Can what is mighty be  
Gained now forever.

Every o'erpowering greatness of action,  
All of the angels who guard what was planted  
Are given counsel by  
Dreams that inspire them.

Fercher von Steinwand then sings further about the  
penetrating of thinking, spiritualized to the point of dreaming,  
into the depths of the world, and about the penetrating of that

kind of dreaming which is an awakening out of our ordinary waking state into *those* depths where the life of what is spiritual in the world can make itself tangible to the soul:

Life that our pulsating  
Hearts have perceived,  
Life that our struggling hearts have ascended  
To all the welcoming  
Cries of the spirits:

And then Fercher von Steinwand lets sound forth to the human spirit what the beings of the spirit realm speak to the soul that opens itself to them in inner contemplation:

Healed ones, now be here by  
Loving encircled!  
What you were seeking in uplifting hours,  
Here, you selected ones,  
Is it disclosed;  
Here in the grandeur of  
Halls of the Godhead,  
Where to the heart other hearts are so pleasing,  
Where buried voices are  
Sounding forth newly

Where now the care-worn are  
Royally striving,  
Radiant souls now in smiles are all wreathed,

Round all the wrecks of the  
Wheels of the ages —

Only the blinded ones,  
Earth-bound and foolish,  
Were for the gulf of destruction begotten,  
Lost to the worlds of  
Spirit perfection!  
Weal to the sens'tive one  
Round whom we hover,  
Whom we enliven to bloss'ming existence,  
All without weaving in  
Fugitive shadows!

In the literary works of Fercher von Steinwand there then  
follows upon this *Chorus of Primal Dreams* his *Chorus of  
Primal Impulses*:

In the distances unbounded  
Of our ancient mother *Night*.  
Hark — to be in inward conflict  
Seems the deep mysterious might!  
Do we hear present'ment striding?  
Is our longing wide awake?  
Was a spirit-lightning lit?  
Are our dreams through spaces gliding?

How now are powers by powers enraptured,



Blessed exchanges!  
Now sudden hastenings.  
Then quiet lingerings,  
Reveling listenings  
Change into beckonings  
Marveling fearings!  
Charm of desiring  
Mounts, and sinks down,  
Sinks into hatred.  
Faced with the pallid  
Picture of embracing  
Cannot clasp hatred.  
Ramifications dim,  
Inclinings burgeoning,  
Send forth their tendrils.  
Ponderous inklings  
Dawn and go faltering  
O'er the wide spaces,  
Seem to give counsel  
Or to give guidance.  
What they're preparing  
Is it the sowing  
Of immense actions,  
Of radiant ages?  
Who felt the furrows  
To be creative!  
Who wandered through them

Blissfully savoring,  
Or disentangling,  
Grandeurs discovering!  
Yonder the stir is like spirits embracing  
We are enwarmed  
And are receiving,  
Seeking, and thinking,  
See ourselves lifted,  
Woven in joy with  
Highest beginnings.  
You wafting 'round us,  
In us arising:  
“You are ideas! —”

Reflecting in this way, the poet's soul enters into an experience of how the *ideas of the world-spirit* announce the secrets of existence to the spirit of man's soul and of how the spirit of man's soul beholds the shapers of sense-perceptible shapes. — After presenting the observations of the soul within the chorus of primal world impulses in brilliant, ringing pictures, the poet concludes:

May duration grow accustomed  
To what urge has conjured up;  
May adorning and appeasement  
In creation's stream prevail.  
Sweetest light! in noble ringing

Mounts my heart aloft to you:  
Linger at your western gate;  
Help to crown the deed of love!  
Risen from all earthly bonds is our impulse Soul —  
resurrected!

But what is ripened  
Ruling, and valid  
Proves to be *spirit*!  
All that is circling,  
All earth foundations,  
All heavenly kindlings are  
Self-made in spirit,  
Came forth from spirit,  
Work through the spirit

—

Powerful freedom from chaos did fashion  
Space for good fortune!  
Cloaked, with the dew of its deep-breathing mildness, Forest  
and field!  
Cared that the dew and the light be companions,  
Forming the hem of deep transfiguration —  
Cared that each droplet should float at the threshold  
of Spiritual radiance!

In Ferchervon Steinwand's *Complete Works* (published by  
Theodor Daberkow in Vienna), there are also several  
indications about his life given by the poet himself when

pressed by friends on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, He wrote, “I began life on March 22, 1828 upon the heights of the Steinwand above the banks of the Möll in Carinthia (*Kärnten*); that means, in the midst of a defiant congregation of mountains with their heads held high, beneath whose domineering grandeur burdened human beings seem continuously to grow poorer,”

Since, in his Chorus of Primal Impulses, we find the world view of German idealism cast in the form of a poetic creation, it is interesting to see how the poet, on his paths through Austrian spiritual life, receives impulses from this world view already in his youth. He describes how he enters the university in Graz: “With my credentials — which of course consisted only of my report cards — held tight against my chest, I presented myself to the dean. That was Professor Edlauer, a criminologist of high repute. He hoped to see me (he said) industriously present in his lecture course on natural law. Behind the curtain of this innocent title he presented us for the whole semester, in rousing lectures, with those German philosophers who, under the fatherly care of our well-meaning spiritual guardians were banned and kept from us: Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and so on — heroes, therefore; that means men who founded and fructified all areas of pure thinking, who gave the language and created the concepts for all the other sciences, and who, consequently, are illustrious names shining from our street corners today and seeming

almost strange there in their particular diamond clarity. This semester was my *vita nuova*!”

Whoever learns to know Fercher von Steinwand’s tragedy *Dankmar*, his *Countess Seelenbrand*, his *German Tones from Austria*, and other works of his will be able through this to feel many of the forces that were working in the Austrian spiritual life of the second half of the nineteenth century. And everything about Fercher von Steinwand testifies to the fact that one receives out of his soul a picture from this spiritual life in clarity, truth, and genuineness. The amiable Austrian poet in dialect Leopold Hormann felt rightly when he wrote the words:

Far from all baseness  
All avarice and meanness;  
Foe of publicity,  
That loathesome false lady;  
German in soul,  
Strong yet with kindness  
Great in his thinking,  
No faltering and wavering,  
Proof against all objections: —  
Fercher von Steinwand!

\* \* \*

Out of the Austrian spiritual life of the second half of the

nineteenth century, a thinker arose who brought to expression deeply significant characteristics of the content of modern world views: the moral philosopher of Darwinism, Bartholomaeus von Carneri. He was a thinker who experienced the public life of Austria as his own happiness or suffering; for many years, as a representative in the federal council, he took an active interest in this life with all the power of his spirit. Carneri could *only* appear at first to be an opponent of a world view in accordance with the spirit. For, all his efforts go to shaping a world picture from only those mental pictures which occur in the train of thought stimulated by Darwinism. But if one reads Carneri with a sense not only for the *content* of his views but also for what lay *beneath the surface* of his truth-seeking soul, one will discover a remarkable fact. An almost entirely materialistic world picture takes shape in this thinker, but with a clarity of thought that stems from the deep-lying, idealistic basic impulse of his being. For him as for many of his contemporaries the mental pictures growing from a world view rooted entirely in the soil of Darwinism burst into his thought-life with such overpowering force that he could do no other than incorporate all his consideration of man's spiritual life into this world view. To want to approach the spirit cognitively on any path other than those taken by Darwin seemed to him to rend the unified being that must extend out over all human striving in knowledge. In his view Darwinism had shown how a unified, lawful interrelationship of causes and effects encompasses

the development of all the beings of nature up to man. Whoever understands the sense of this interrelationship must also see how the same lawfulness enhances and refines the natural forces and drives in man in such a way that they grow upward to the heights of moral ideals and views. Carneri believes that only man's blind arrogance and misled overestimation of himself can entice his striving for knowledge into wanting to approach the spiritual world by different cognitive means than in approaching nature.

Every page of Carneri's writings on the moral being of man, however, shows that he would have shaped his view of life in Hegel's way if, at a particular point of development in his life, Darwinism had not struck like lightning, with irresistible suggestive force, into his thought-world; this occurred in such a way that with great effort he silenced his predisposition toward an idealistically developed world view. As his writings also attest, this world view would definitely not have arisen through the pure thinking at work in Hegel, but rather through a thinking that resounded with a hearty, contemplative quality; but his thinking would have gone in Hegel's direction.

As though from hidden depths of Carneri's soul, Hegel's way of picturing things often arises in Carneri's writings, *cautioning* him as it were. On page 79 of his *Fundamentals of Ethics* one reads: "With Hegel ... a dialectical movement took the place of the law of causality: a gigantic thought, which, like

the Titans all, could not escape the fate of arrogance. His *monism* wanted to storm Olympus but sank back down to earth; it remained a beacon for all future thought, however, illuminating the path and also the abyss.” On page 154 of the same book, Carneri speaks of the nature of the Greek way and says of it: “In this respect We do not remember the mythical heroic age, nor yet the times of Homer. ... We take ourselves back to the highlight of ages that Hegel depicted so aptly as the *youthful age* of mankind.” On page 189 Carneri characterizes the attempts that have been made to fathom the laws of thinking, and observes: “The most magnificent example of this kind is Hegel’s attempt to let thoughts unfold, so to speak, without being determined by the thinker. The fact that he went too far in this does not prevent an unprejudiced person from acknowledging this attempt (to see one single law as underlying all physical and spiritual evolution) to be the most splendid one on the whole history of philosophy. The services he rendered to the development of German thinking are imperishable, and many an enthusiastic student who later became an embittered opponent of his has unintentionally raised a lasting monument to him in the perfection of expression he acquired through Hegel.” On page 421 one reads: “Hegel has told us, in an unsurpassable manner, how far one can go in philosophizing” with mere, so-called, healthy common sense.

Now one could assert that Carneri too has “raised a lasting



monument to Hegel in the perfection of expression he acquired through Hegel,” even though he applied this way of expression to a world picture with which Hegel would certainly not have been in agreement. But Darwinism worked upon Carneri with such suggestive power that he included Hegel, along with Spinoza and Kant, among those thinkers of whom he said: “They would have acknowledged the sincerity of his (Carneri’s) striving, which would never have dared to look beyond them if Darwin had not rent the curtain that hung like night over the whole creation as long as the theory of purpose remained irrefutable. We have this consciousness, but also the conviction that these men would have left many things unsaid or would have said them differently if it had been granted them to live in our age of liberated natural science...”

Carneri has developed a variety of materialism in which mental sharpness often degenerates into naiveté, and insights about “liberated natural science” often degenerate into blindness toward the impossibility of one’s own concepts. “We grasp substance as matter insofar as phenomena — resulting from the divisibility and movement of substance — work *corporeally*, i.e., *as mass, upon our senses*. If the divisions or differentiations go so far that the phenomena resulting from them are no longer sense-perceptible but are *now only perceptible to thinking*, then the effect of substance is a *spiritual* one” (Carneri’s *Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 30). That is as if someone were to explain reading by saying: As long

as a person has not learned to read, he cannot say what stands upon the written page of a book. For, only the shapes of the letters reveal themselves to his gaze. As long as he can view only these letter shapes, into which the words are divisible, his observation of the letters cannot lead to reading. Only when he manages also to perceive the letter shapes in a yet more divided or differentiated form will the sense of these letters work upon his soul.

Of course, an unshakable believer in materialism would find an objection like this absurd. But the difficulty of putting materialism in the right light lies precisely in this necessity of expressing such simple thoughts in order to do so. One must express thoughts that one can scarcely believe the adherents of materialism do not form for themselves. And so the biased charge can easily be leveled against someone trying to clarify materialism that he is using meaningless phraseology to counter a view that rests upon the empirical knowledge of modern science and upon its rigorous principles<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, the great power of materialism to convince its adherents arises only through the fact that they are unable to feel the weight of the simple arguments that destroy their view. Like so many others, they are convinced not by the light of logical reasons which they have examined, but by the force of habitual thoughts which they have not examined, which, in fact, they feel no immediate need to examine at all. But Carneri does differ from the materialists who scarcely have

any inkling of this need, through the fact that his idealism continuously brings this need to his consciousness; he must therefore silence this need, often by quite artificial means. He has scarcely finished professing that the spiritual is an effect of finely split-up substance when he adds: "This conception of the spirit will be unsatisfying to many people who make other claims about the spirit; still, in the further course of our investigations, the value of our view will prove to be significant and entirely able to show the *materialism* which wants to *grasp* the phenomena of the spirit *corporeally* that it cannot go beyond certain bounds" (*Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 30). Yes, Carneri has a real aversion to being counted among the materialists; he defends himself against this with statements like the following: "*Rigid materialism* is just as one-sided as the old metaphysics: the former arrives at no meaning for its configurations; the latter arrives at no configurations for its meaning; with materialism there is a corpse; with metaphysics there is a ghost; and what they are both struggling for in vain is the creative heat of sentient life" (*Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 68).

But Carneri does feel, in fact, how justified one is in calling him a materialist; for, no one with healthy senses, after all, even if he is an adherent of materialism, will declare that a moral ideal can be "grasped corporeally," to use Carneri's expression. He will say only that a moral ideal manifests in connection with what is material through a material process.

And that is also what Carneri states in his above assertion about the divisibility of substance. Out of this feeling he then says (in his book *Sensation and Consciousness*): “One will reproach us with materialism insofar as we deny all spirit and grant existence only to matter. But this reproach is no longer valid the moment one takes one’s start from this ideal nature of one’s picture of the world, for which matter itself is nothing but a concept a thinking person has.” But now take hold of your head and feel whether it is still all there after participating in this kind of a conceptual dance! Substance becomes matter when it is so coarsely split up that it works only “upon the senses as mass”; it becomes spirit when it is split up so finely that it is then “perceptible only to thinking.” And matter, i.e., coarsely split up substance, is after all only “a concept a thinking person has.” When split up coarsely, therefore, substance achieves nothing more than playing the — to a materialist! — dubious role of a human concept; but split up more finely, substance becomes spirit. But then the bare human concept would have to split up even finer. Now such a world view would make that hero, who pulled himself out of the water by his own hair, into the perfect model for reality.

One can understand why another Austrian thinker, F. von Feldegg (in the November 1894 edition of “German Words”), would reply to Carneri with these words: “The moment one takes one’s start from the ideal nature of one’s picture of the world! What an arbitrary supposition, in all the forced wrong-

headedness of that thought! Does it indeed depend so entirely on our pleasure whether we take our start from the ideal nature of our picture of the world or, for example, from its opposite — from the reality of our picture of the world in fact? And matter, for this ideal nature, is supposed to be altogether nothing except a concept a thinking person has? This is actually the most absolute idealism — like that of a Hegel, for example — which is meant to render assistance here against the reproach of materialism; but it won't do to turn to someone in the moment of need whom one has persistently denied until then. And how is Carneri to reconcile this idealistic belief with everything else in his book? In fact, there is only one explanation for this state of affairs and that is: Even Carneri is afraid of, yet covets, the transcendental. But that is a half-measure which exacts a heavy toll. Carneri's 'Monistic Misgivings' fall in this way into two heterogeneous parts, into a crudely materialistic part and into a hiddenly idealistic part. In the one part, the author's head is correct in the end, because he is undeniably sunk over his head in materialism; but in the other part, the author's deeper heart (*Gemüt*) resists the clumsy demands of rationalism's modes and conceits; it resists them with all the power of that metaphysical magic from which, even in our crudely sense-bound age, nobler natures are not able to escape entirely."

And yet, in spite of all this, Carneri is a significant personality of whom one can say (as I indicated in my book

*Riddles of Philosophy*: “This Austrian thinker sought, out of Darwinism, to open wide vistas in viewing the world and in shaping life. Eleven years after the appearance of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, Carneri came out with his book *Morality and Darwinism*, in which, in a most comprehensive manner, he turned this new world of ideas into the foundation of an ethical world view. After that he worked ceaselessly to elaborate a Darwinistic ethics. Carneri seeks to find elements in our picture of nature through which the self-conscious ‘I’ can fit into this picture. He wants to think this picture of nature so broadly and largely that it can also comprise the human soul.”

By their very character, Carneri’s writings seem to me in fact everywhere to challenge us to root everything out of their content that their author had *forced* himself into by surrendering to the yoke of the materialistic world view; his writings challenge us to look only at that which — like an elemental *inspiration* of his deeper heart — appears in them as a revelation of a large-scale human being. Just read, from this point of view, what he thinks the task to be for an education toward true humanness: “It is the task of education ... to develop the human being in such a way that he must do the good, that human dignity not suffer from this, but that the harmonious development of a being who by his very nature is happy to do what is noble and great is an ethical phenomenon more beautiful than anything we could imagine. ... The

accomplishment of this magnificent task is possible through man's striving for bliss, into which his drive for self-preservation purifies itself as soon as his intelligence develops fully. Thinking is based on sensation and is only the other side of feeling; which is why all thinking that does not attain maturity through the warmth of feeling — and also all feeling that does not illuminate itself with the light of thinking — is one-sided. It is the task of education, through the harmonious development of thinking and feeling, to purify man's striving for bliss in such a way that the 'I' will see in the 'you' its natural extension and in the 'we' its necessary consummation, and egoism will recognize altruism as its higher truth. ... Only from the standpoint of our drive to attain bliss is it comprehensible that a person would give his life for a loved one or to a noble end: he sees precisely in this his higher happiness. In seeking his true happiness, man attains morality, But he must be educated toward this, educated in such a way that he can absolutely do no other. In the blissful feeling of the nobility of his deed he finds his most beautiful recompense and demands nothing more." (See Carneri's introduction to his book *Modern Man*.) One can see: Carneri considers our striving for bliss, as he sees it, to be a power of nature lying within true human nature; he considers it to be a power that, under the right conditions, must unfold, the way a seed must unfold when it has the appropriate conditions. In the same way that a magnet, through its own particular being, has the power to attract, so the animal has the drive of self-

preservation and man the drive to attain bliss. One does not need to graft anything onto man's being in order to lead them to morality; one needs only to *develop* rightly their drive to attain bliss; then, through this drive, they will unfold themselves to true morality. Carneri observes in detail the various manifestations of human soul life: how sensation stimulates or dulls this life; how emotions and passions work: and how in all this the drive to attain bliss unfolds. He presupposes this drive in all these soul manifestations as their actual basic power. And through the fact that he endows this concept of bliss with a broad meaning, all the sours wishing, wanting, and doing falls — for him, in any case — into the realm of this concept. How a person is depends upon which picture of his own happiness is hovering before him: One person sees his happiness in satisfying his lower drives; another person sees it in deeds of devoted love and self-denial. If it were said of someone that he was not striving for happiness, that he was only selflessly doing his duty, Carneri would object: This is precisely what gives him the feeling of happiness — to chase after happiness but not consciously. But in broadening the concept of bliss in this way, Carneri reveals the absolutely idealistic basic tenor of his world view. For if happiness is something quite different for different people, then morality cannot lie in the striving for happiness; the fact is, rather, that man feels his ability to be moral as something that makes him happy. Through this, human striving is not brought down out of the realm of moral ideals



into the mere craving for happiness; rather, one recognizes that it lies in the essential being of man to see his happiness in the achieving of his ideals. “We are convinced,” says Carneri, “that ethics has to make do with the argument that the path of man is the path to bliss, and that man, *in traveling the path to bliss, matures into a moral being.*” (*Fundamentals of Ethics*, p. 423)

Whoever believes now that through such views Carneri wants to make ethics Darwinistic is allowing himself to be misled by the way this thinker expresses himself. He is compelled to express himself like this by the overwhelming power of the predominant natural-scientific way of picturing things in his age. The truth is: Carneri does not want to make ethics Darwinistic; he wants to *make Darwinism ethical*. He wants to show that one need only know man in his true being — like the natural scientist seeks to know a being in nature — in order to find him to be not a nature being but rather a *spirit being*. Carneri’s significance consists in the fact that he wants to let Darwinism flow into a world view in accordance with the spirit. And through this he is one of the significant spirits of the second half of the nineteenth century. One does not understand the demands placed on humanity by the natural-scientific insights of this age if one thinks like those people who want to let all striving for knowledge merge into natural science, if one thinks like those who toward the end of the nineteenth century called themselves adherents of

materialism, or even if one thinks like those today who actually *are* not less materialistic but who assure us ever and again that materialism has “long ago been overcome” by science. Today, many people say they are not materialists only because they lack the ability to understand that they are in fact materialists. One can flatly state that nowadays many people stop worrying about their materialism by pretending to themselves that in their view it is no longer necessary to call themselves materialists. One must nevertheless label them so. One has not yet overcome materialism by rejecting the view of a series of thinkers from the second half of the nineteenth century who held all spiritual experiences to, be the mere working of substance; one overcomes it only by allowing oneself to think about the spiritual in a way that accords with the spirit, just as one thinks about nature in a way that accords with nature. What is meant by this is already clear from the preceding arguments of this book, but will become particularly apparent in the final considerations conceived of as “new perspectives” in our last chapter,

But one will also not do justice to the demands placed on humanity by the natural-scientific insights of our age if one sets up a world view *against* natural science, and only rejects the “raw” mental pictures of “materialism,” Since the achievement of the natural-scientific insights of the nineteenth century, any world view that is in accordance with the spirit and that wishes to be in harmony with its age must take up

these insights as part of its thought-world. And Carneri grasped this powerfully and expressed it urgently in his writings. Carneri, who was only taking his first steps on the path of a genuine understanding of modern natural scientific mental pictures, could not yet fully see that such an understanding does not lead to a consolidating of materialism but rather to its true overcoming. Therefore he believed — to refer once more to the words of Brentano (see page 45 of this book) — that no success can be expected from modern science in “gaining certainty about the hopes of a Plato and Aristotle for the continued existence of our better part after the dissolution of the body,” But whoever goes deeply enough into Carneri’s thoughts, not only to grasp their content but also to observe the path of knowledge on which this thinker could take only the first steps, will find that through him, in another direction, something similar has occurred for the elaboration of the world view of German idealism as occurred through Troxler, Immanuel Hermann Fichte, and others going in the direction characterized in this book. These spirits sought, with the powers of Hegelian thinking, to penetrate not merely into spirit that has become sense-perceptible but also into that realm of spirit which does not reveal itself in the sense world. Carneri strives, with a view of life in accordance with the spirit, to devote himself to the natural-scientific way of picturing things. The further pursuit of the path sensed by these thinkers can show that the cognitive powers to which they turned will not destroy the “hopes of a Plato and Aristotle for

the continued existence of our better part after the dissolution of the body,” but rather will give these hopes a sound basis in knowledge. On the one hand, F.v. Feldegg, whom we have already mentioned (“German Words,” November 1894), is certainly justified when he says — in connection with the conflict in which Carneri was placed toward idealism and materialism: — “But the time is no longer far off in which this conflict will be settled, not merely as one might suppose within the single individual, but within our whole cultural consciousness. But Carneri’s ‘Misgivings’ are perhaps an isolated forerunner of completely different and more powerful ‘Misgivings,’ which then, raging toward us like a storm, will sweep away everything about our ‘scientific’ creed that has not yet fallen prey to self-disintegration,” On the other hand, one can recognize that Carneri, by the work he did on Darwinism for ethics, became at the same time one of the first to *overcome* the Darwinian way of thinking.

\* \* \*

Carneri was a personality whose thinking about the questions of existence gave all his activity and work in life their particular stamp. He was not one of those who become “philosophers” by allowing the healthy roots of life reality to dry up within them. Rather, he was one of those who proved that a realistic study of life can create practical people better than that attitude which keeps itself fearfully, and yet

comfortably, at a distance from all ideas and which obstinately harps on the theme that the “true” conduct of life must not be spoiled by any dreaming in concepts. Carneri was an Austrian representative in the Styrian provincial diet from 1861 on, and in the federal council from 1870 to 1891. Even now, I often have to think back on the heart-lifting impression he made on me when, from the gallery of the Viennese federal council, as a young man of twenty-five just beginning life, I heard Carneri speak. A man stood down there who had taken up deeply into his thoughts the determining factors of Austrian life and the situation arising from the evolution of Austrian culture and from the life forces of its peoples; this was a man who spoke what he had to express from that high vantage point upon which his world view had placed him. And in all this there was never a pale thought. always tones of heart’s warmth, always ideas that were strong with reality, not the words of a merely thinking head; rather, the revelations of a whole man who felt Austria pulsing in his own soul and who had clarified this feeling through the idea: “Mankind will deserve its name wholly, and wholly travel the path of morality only when it knows no other battle than work. no other shield than right, no other weapon than intelligence, no other banner than civilization.” (Carneri, *Morality and Darwinism*, p. 508)

I have tried to show how a thoughtful idealism constitutes the roots, solidly planted in reality, of Carneri’s soul life; but also how — overwhelmed by the materialistic view of the time

— this idealism goes its way accompanied by a thinking whose contradictions are indeed sensed but not fully resolved. I believe that this, in the form in which it manifests in Carneri, is based on a particular characteristic that the folk spirit (*Volkstum*) in Austria can easily impress upon the soul, a characteristic, it seems to me, that can be understood only with difficulty outside of Austria, even by Germans. One can experience it, perhaps, only if one has oneself grown up in the Austrian folk spirit (*Volksart*). This characteristic has been determined by the evolution of Austrian life during the last centuries. Through education there, one is brought into a different relationship to the manifestations of the immediate folk spirit than in German areas outside Austria. In Austria, what one takes up through one's schooling bears traits that are not so directly a transformation of what one experiences from the folk spirit as is the case with the Germans in Germany. Even when Fichte unfolds his thoughts to their fullest extent, there lives something in them recognizable as a direct continuation of the folk element working in his Central German fatherland, in the house of Christian Fichte, the farmer and weaver. In Austria, what one develops in oneself through education and self-education often bears fewer of such directly indigenous characteristics. The indigenous element lives more *indirectly*, yet often no less powerfully thereby. One bears conflicting feelings in one's soul; this conflict, in its unconscious working, gives life there its particularly Austrian coloring.

As an example of an Austrian with this soul characteristic, let us look at Mission, one of the most significant Austrian poets in dialect.

To be sure, poetry in dialect has also arisen in other Germans out of subterranean depths of the soul similar to those of Mission. But what is characteristic of him is that he became a poet in dialect through the above-mentioned trait existing in the soul life of many Austrians. Joseph Mission was born in 1803, in Mühlbach, in the Lower Austrian district, below Mannhardtsberg; he completed school in Krems and entered the Order of Pious Schools. He worked as a secondary school teacher in Horn, Krems, and Vienna. In 1850 there appeared a pearl of Austrian poetry in dialect written by him: "Ignaz, a Lower Austrian Farmer Boy, Goes Abroad." It was published in an uncompleted form. The provost Karl Landsteiner, in a beautiful little book, later wrote about Mission and reprinted the uncompleted poem.)

Karl Julius Schröer said of it (1875), and quite aptly, in my opinion: "As small as the poem is and as solitary as it has remained through the fact that Mission published nothing further, it nevertheless deserves special attention. It is of the first order among Austria's poems in dialect. The epic peacefulness that permeates the whole, and the masterful depiction in the details that enthralls us constantly, I astonishing and refreshing us through its truth — these are

qualities in Mission that no one else has equaled.” The setting out on his travels of a Lower Austrian farmer boy is what Mission portrays. A direct, truth-sustained revelation of the Lower Austrian folk spirit (*Volkstum*) lives in this poem. Mission lived in the world of thoughts he had attained through his education and self-education. This life represented the one side of his soul. This was not a direct continuation of the life rooted in his Lower Austrianness. But precisely because of this and as though unconnected to this more personal side of his soul experiences, there arose in his heart (*Gemüt*) the truest picture of his folk spirit, as though from subterranean depths of the soul, and placed itself there I as the other side of his inner experience. The magic of the direct folk spirit quality of Mission’s poem is an effect of the “two souls within his breast.” I will now quote a part of this poem here and then reproduce the Lower Austrian dialect in High German prose as truly and modestly as possible. (In this reproduction, my intentions are *only* that the sense of the poem emerge fully in a feeling way. If, in such a translation, one simply replaces the word in dialect with the corresponding word in High German, the matter becomes basically falsified. For, the word in dialect often corresponds to a completely different nuance of feeling than the corresponding word in High German.)

Advice from my Father for my Travels  
(Translation of Rudolf Steiner’s High German prose version.)



Ignaz, now listen well to what I say to you; I am your father.  
In God's name, since it must be so that you are to seek your  
fortune in the wide world,  
Therefore I must tell you this; and what I tell you take well to  
heart.

I and your mother are old and have stayed at home; you know  
that nothing comes from that.

One slaves away, takes pains, works hard, and weakens  
oneself in the care of work

One does this out of love for one's children; what would one  
not do just so they will not fall into bad ways.

If later one becomes weak and sick, and hard times come,  
Even they spring upon us lovingly if, when they come, proper  
honest children

Are standing by to help, so that one can more easily do what  
the state and life demands.

If good fortune should find you, don't live like a cavalier.

Stay as you were, in the golden mean of the middle road; do  
not budge from the right path of life.

Good fortune is round like a ball; it rolls just as easily away  
from as toward us.

If some effort does not succeed, or if a misfortune befalls you,  
do not speak of it to people.

Remain calm; let nothing show; do not be faint-hearted;

Pour out your troubles to God alone; beg him; I tell you, He  
makes everything better again!

To act troubled, to withdraw, to pull a sour face, to be whiny:

nothing is achieved by that.

To let your head hang as though the chickens had eaten your bread away from you:

That improves nothing bad, let alone making the good even better!

Guard the possessions you take with you; take a little care for the future.

If someone gives you something, just receive it, without affectation, and say: "God bless you!"

Listen, Ignaz, and remember this well: no one has ever been punished for being polite!

Don't act stubborn; new places make a person modest; this is a saying and a true word.

Don't be led astray into gambling; don't let the dance floor mean too much to you.

Don't let anyone read your future in the cards; and do not seek your destiny in the book of dreams.

If two paths lie before you and one of them is new, then you take the old one.

If one is crooked, which is often the case, then you take the straight one.

Protect your health; health is the best of all possessions.

Admit it to me, after all: What does one really possess in the world if one lacks health?

If you ever come back home and no longer find us old folk in this little room,

Then we are there where your grandfather and your  
grandmother await us with joy,  
Where our benefactors and our dead relatives will find us!  
They will all recognize us at once — and this, Ignaz, is  
something very — beautiful.

In 1879 Karl Julius Schröer writes the following about this  
Austrian from whose educated soul there arose so  
magnificently the life of the peasants and also, as the above  
section of his poem shows so well, the native philosophy of  
the peasants: “His talent found no encouragement. Although  
he wrote much more than the above work, he burned his  
entire literary output ... and now lives as librarian for the  
Piaristic faculty of St. Thekla of the Fields in Vienna, isolated  
from all social intercourse, as he puts it, ‘without joy or  
sorrow.’” As in the case of Joseph Mission one must seek  
many personalities of Austrian spiritual life living in obscurity.

Mission cannot come into consideration as a thinker among  
the personalities portrayed in this book. Nevertheless, to  
picture his soul life gives one an understanding for the  
particular coloration of the ideas of Austrian thinkers. The  
thoughts of Schelling, Hegel, Fichte, and Planck shape  
themselves plastically out of each other like parts of a  
thought-organism. One thought grows forth from the other.

And in the physiognomy of this whole thought-organism one

recognizes characteristics of a certain people. In the case of Austrian thinkers one thought stands more beside the other; and each one grows on its own — not so much out of the other — but out of a common soul ground. Therefore the total configuration does not bear the direct characteristics of the people; but, on the other hand, these characteristics are poured out over each individual thought like a kind of basic *mood*. This basic mood is held back by these thinkers within their heart (*Gemüt*) in the way natural to them; it sounds forth but faintly. It manifests in a personality like Mission as homesickness for what is elemental in his people. In Schröer, Fercher von Steinwand, Cameri, and even in Hamerling, this basic mood works along everywhere in the fundamental tone of their striving. Through this, their thinking takes on a contemplative character.

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In Robert Hamerling one of the greatest poets of modern times has arisen from the lower Austrian district. At the same time he is one of the bearers of the idealism in German world views. In this book I do not intend to speak about the nature and significance of Hamerling's literary works. I wish only to indicate something of the position he took within the evolution of world views in modern times. He did in fact give expression in the form of thoughts to his world view in his work *The Atomism of Will*. (The Styrian poet and folk author Adolf Harpf

published this book in 1891, after Hamerling's death.) The book bears the subtitle "Contribution to a Critique of Modern Knowledge."

Hamerling knew that many who called themselves philosophers would receive his "contribution" with — perhaps tolerant — bewonderment. Many might think: What could this idealistically inclined poet undertake to accomplish in a field that demands the strictly scientific approach? And the presentations in his book did not convince those who asked this; for their judgment of him was only a wave rising from the depths of their souls where (in an unconscious or subconscious way) this judgment issued from *habits of thought*. Such people can be very clever; scientifically they can be very important: and yet the struggles of a truly poetic nature are not comprehensible to them. Within the soul of such a poetic nature there live all the conflicts from which the riddles of the world present themselves to human beings. A truly poetic nature, therefore, has inner experience of these world riddles. When such a nature expresses itself poetically, there holds sway in the foundations of his soul the questioning world order that, without transforming itself in his consciousness into thoughts, manifests itself in elemental artistic creation. To be sure, no inkling of the real being of such true poetic natures is present even in those poets who recoil from a world view as from a fire that might singe their "life-filled originality." A true poet might never shape thoughts

in his consciousness for what actually lives powerfully in the roots of his soul life in the way of unconscious world thoughts: nevertheless, he stands with his inner experience in those depths of reality of which a person has no inkling if, in his comfortable wisdom, he regards as mere dreams the place where sense-perceptible reality is granted its existence from out of the spirit. If now, for once, a truly poetic nature like Robert Hamerling, without dulling his creative poetic power, is able to lift into his consciousness, as a thought-world, what often has remained unconscious in other poets, then, with respect to such a phenomenon, one can also hold the view that, through this, special light is shed from spiritual depths upon the riddles of the world. In the foreword of his *Atomism of Will*, Hamerling himself tells how he arrived at his thought-world. "I did not suddenly throw myself upon philosophy at some point out of a whim, for example, or because I wanted to by my hand at something different. Moved by the natural and inescapable urge that drives us, after all, to search out the truth and solve the riddles of existence, I have occupied myself since earliest youth with the great questions about human cognition. I have never been able to regard philosophy as a special department of science that one can study or not study — like statistics or forestry — but always as the investigation into what is most immediate important, and interesting to every person. ... For my own part, I could by no means keep myself from following the most primal, natural, and universal of all spiritual drives and from forming a

judgment over the course of the years about the fundamental questions of existence and life.”

One of the people who valued Hamerling’s thought-world highly was Vincenz Knauer, the learned and sensitive Benedictine priest living in Vienna. As guest lecturer at the university in Vienna, he held lectures in which he wanted to show how Hamerling stood in that evolutionary stream of world views that began with Thales in Greece and that manifested in the Austrian poet and thinker in its most significant form for the end of the nineteenth century. To be sure, Vincenz Knauer belonged to those researchers to whom narrow-heartedness is foreign. As a young philosopher he wrote a book on the moral philosophy in Shakespeare’s works. (Knauer’s lectures in Vienna were published under the title *The Main Problems of Philosophy from Thales to Hamerling*.)

The basic idealistic mood underlying Hamerling’s view of reality also lives in his literary work. The figures in his epic and dramatic creations are not a copy of what spirit-shy observation sees in outer life; they show everywhere how the human soul receives direction and impulses from a spiritual world. Adherents of spirit-shy observation are critical of such creations. They call them bloodless mental products lacking the juice of real life. They are often to be heard belaboring the catch phrase: The characters of this poet are not like the

people who walk around in the world; they are schemata, born of abstractions. If the “men of reality” who speak like this could only have an inkling, in fact, how much they themselves are walking abstractions and their belief the abstraction of an abstraction! If they only knew how soulless their blood-filled characters are to someone having a sense not just for pulsing blood but also for the way soul pulses in the blood. From this kind of “reality standpoints” one has said that Hamerling’s dramatic work *Danton and Robespierre* has enriched the shadow folk of bygone revolutionary heroes with a number of new schemata.

Hamerling defended himself against such criticisms in his “Epilogue to the Critics” which he appended to the later editions of his *Ahasver in Rome*. In this epilogue he writes: “... People say that *Ahasver in Rome* is an ‘allegorical’ work — a word that immediately makes many people break out in goose-bumps. — The poem is allegorical, to be sure, insofar as a *mythical figure* is woven in whose right to existence is always based only upon the fact that it *represents* something. For, every myth is an idea brought into picture form by the imagination of the people. But, people will say, Nero is also supposed to ‘represent’ something — the ‘lust for life’! All right, he does represent the lust for life; but no differently than Moliere’s Miser represents miserliness and Shakespeare’s Romeo love. There are, to be sure, poetic figures that are nothing more at all than allegorical schemata and consist only



of their inner abstract significance — comparable to Heine's sick, skinny Kanonikus who finally was composed of nothing but 'spirit and bandages.' But, for a poetic figure filled with real life, its inherent significance is not some vampire that sucks out its blood. Does anything actually exist that 'signifies' nothing? I would like to know, after all, how a beggar would manage not to signify poverty and a Croesus wealth. ... I believe therefore that Nero, who is thirsting for life, sacrifices Just as little of his reality by 'signifying' lust for life when placed next to Ahasver, who is longing for death, as a rich merchant sacrifices of his blooming stoutness by happening to stand beside a beggar and necessarily making visible, in an allegorical group, the contrast between poverty and wealth," This is how a poet, ensouled by an idealistic world view, repulses the attacks of those who shudder if they catch a scent anywhere of an idea rooted in true reality, in spiritual reality.

When one begins a reading of Hamerling's *Atomism of Will*, one can at first have the definite feeling that he let himself be convinced by Kantianism that a knowledge of true reality, of the "thing-in-itself," was impossible. Still, in the further course of the presentations in his book, one sees that what happened for Hamerling with Kantianism was like Carneri with Darwinism. He let himself be overcome by the suggestive power of certain Kantian thoughts; but then the view wins out in him that man — even though he cannot push through to

true reality by looking outward with his senses — does nevertheless encounter true reality when he delves down through the surface of soul experience into the foundations of the soul.

Hamerling begins in an entirely Kantian way; “Certain stimuli produce odors in our sense of smell. The rose, therefore, has no fragrance if no one smells it. — Certain oscillations of the air produce sound in our ear. Sound, therefore, does not exist without an ear. A rifle shot, therefore, would not ring out if no one heard it. ... Whoever holds onto this will understand what a naive mistake it is to believe that, besides the perception (*Anschauung*) or mental picture we call ‘horse,’ there exists yet another horse — and in fact only then the actual real one — of which our perception ‘horse’ is only a copy. Outside of myself there is — let me state this again — only the sum total of those determining factors which cause a perception to be produced in my senses which I call a ‘horse’.” These thoughts work with such suggestive power that Hamerling can add to them the words: “If that is not obvious to you, dear reader, and if your understanding shies away from this fact like a skittish horse, then read no further; leave this and every other book on philosophical matters unread; for you lack the necessary ability to grasp a fact without bias and to retain it in thought.” I would like to respond to Hamerling: “May there in fact be many people whose intellect does indeed shy away from the opening words of his

book like a skittish horse but who also possess enough strength of ideas to value rightly the deeply penetrating later chapters; and I am happy that Hamerling did after all write these later chapters even though his intellect did not shy away from the assertion: There in me is the mental picture 'horse'; but outside there does not exist any actual real horse but only the sum total of those determining factors which cause a perception to be produced in my senses which I call a 'horse'." For here again one has to do with an assertion — like that made by Carneri with respect to matter, substance, and spirit — that gains overwhelming power over a person because he just does not see at all the impossible thoughts into which he has spun himself. The whole train of Hamerling's thoughts is worth no more than this: Certain effects emanating from me onto the surface of a coated pane of glass produce my image in the mirror. Nothing occurs through the effects emanating from me if no mirror is there. Outside the mirror there is only the sum total of those determining factors which bring it about that in the mirror an image is produced that I refer to with my name.

In imagination I can hear all the declamations against a philosophical dilettantism — carried to the point of frivolity that would dare to dispose of the serious scientific thoughts of philosophers with this kind of a childish objection. I know, in fact, what all has been brought forward by philosophers since Kant in the way of such thoughts. When one speaks as I have

just done, one is not understood by the chorus that propounds these thoughts. One must turn to unprejudiced reason, which understands that the way one conducts one's thinking is the same in each case: whether, when confronted by the mental picture of the horse in my soul, I decree the outer horse to be nonexistent, or, when confronted by the image in the mirror, I doubt my existence. One does not even need to enter into certain, supposedly epistemological refutations of this comparison. For, what would be presented there — as the entirely different relationship, after all, of the “mental picture to what is mentally pictured” than of the mirror image to what is mirroring itself — already stands there for certain epistemologists as established with absolute certainty; for other readers, however, the corresponding refutation of these thoughts could in fact be only a web of unfruitful abstractions.

Out of his healthy idealism, Hamerling feels that an idea, in order to be justified within a world view, must not *only* be correct but also in *accordance with reality*. (Here I must express myself in those thoughts which I introduced in the presentation on Karl Christian Planck in this book.). If Hamerling had been less suggestively influenced by the way of thinking described above, he would have noticed that there is nothing in accordance with reality in such thoughts as those which he feels to be necessary in spite of the fact that “one's intellect shys away from them like a skittish horse.” Such thoughts arise in the human soul when the soul has been

made ill by a mind for abstractions estranged from reality and gives itself over to a continuous spinning out of thoughts that are indeed logically coherent but in which no spiritual reality holds sway in a living way. It is precisely his healthy idealism, however, that guides Hamerling in the further thoughts of his *Atomism of Will* out of the web of thoughts he presented in the opening chapters. This becomes particularly clear where he speaks of the human “I” in connection with the life of the soul. Look at the way Hamerling relates to Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am.” Fichte’s way of picturing things (of which we have spoken in our considerations of Fichte in this book) works along like a softly sounding, consonant, basic tone in the beautiful words on page 223 of the first volume of *The Atomism of Will*: “In spite of all the conceptual hairsplitting that carps at it, Descartes’ *Cogito ergo sum* remains the igniting flash of lightning for all modern speculation. But, strictly speaking, this ‘I think, therefore I am’ is not made certain through the fact that I think, but rather through the fact that I say that I think. My conclusion would have the same certainty even if I changed the premise into its reverse and said ‘I do not think, therefore I am.’ In order to be able to say this, I must exist.” In discussing Fichte’s world view, we have said in this book that the statement “I think, therefore I am” cannot maintain itself in the face of man’s sleeping state. One must grasp the certainty of the “I” in such a way that this certainty cannot appear to be exhausted in the inner perception “I think.” Hamerling feels this; therefore he says that “I do not

think, therefore I am” is also valid. He says this because he feels: Within the human “I” something is *experienced* that does not receive the certainty of its existence from thinking, but on the contrary gives to thinking its certainty. Thinking is unfolded by the true “I” in certain states; the experiencing of the “I,” however, is of such a kind that through this experience the soul can feel itself immersed into a spiritual reality in which it knows its existence to be anchored even during other states than those for which Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” applies. But all this is based on the fact that Hamerling knows: When the “I” thinks, *life-will* is living in its thinking. Thinking is by no means mere thinking; it is *willed* thinking. As a thought, “I think” is a mere fantasy that is never and nowhere present. It is always the case that only the “*I think, willing*” is present. Whoever believes in the fantasy of “I think” can isolate himself thereby from the whole spiritual world; and then become either an adherent of materialism or a doubter in the reality of the outer world. He becomes a materialist if he lets himself be snared by the thought — *fully justified* within its own limits — that for the thinking Descartes had in mind the instruments of the nerves are necessary. He becomes a doubter in the reality of the outer world if he becomes entangled in the thought — again justified within certain limits — that all thinking about things is in fact experienced within the soul and that with his thinking, therefore, he can in fact never arrive at an outer world existing in and of itself, even if such an outer world existed. To be sure, whoever sees the will in all thinking

can, if he inclines to abstraction, now isolate the will conceptually from thinking and speak in Schopenhauer's style of a will that supposedly holds sway in all world existence and that drives thinking like whitecaps to the surface of life's phenomena. But someone who sees that only the "I think, willing" has reality would no more picture will and thinking as separated in the human soul than he would picture a man's head and body as separated if he wished his thought to portray *something real*. But such a person also knows that, with his experience of a thinking that is carried by will and *experienced*, he goes outside the boundaries of his soul and enters into the experience of a world process (*Weltgeschehen*) that is also pulsing through his soul. And Hamerling is headed in the direction of just such a world view, in the direction of a world view whose adherent knows that with a *real thought* he has within himself an experience of world-will, not merely an experience of his own "I." Hamerling is striving toward a world view that does not go astray into the chaos of a mysticism of will, but on the contrary wishes to experience the world-will within the clarity of ideas.

With this perspective of the world-will beheld through ideas, Hamerling knows that he now stands in the native soil of the idealism of German world views. His thoughts prove even to himself to have their roots in the German folk spirit (*Volkstum*) that in Jakob Böhme already was struggling for knowledge in an elemental way. On page 259f. of Hamerling's *Atomism of*

*Will* one reads: “To make will the highest philosophical principle is what one seems to have overlooked until now — an eminently *German* thought, a core thought of the German spirit. From the German *Naturphilosophen* of the Middle Ages up to the classical thinkers of the age of German speculation, and even up to Schopenhauer and Hartmann, this thought runs through the philosophy of the German people, emerging sometimes more, sometimes less, often only at one moment, as it were, then disappearing again into the seething masses of our thinkers’ ideas. And so it was also the *philosophus teutonicus* who was in truth the most German and the most profound of all modern philosophers, and who was the first, in his deeply thoughtful, original, and pictorial language, to grasp the will expressly as the absolute, as the unity. ...” And now, in order to point to yet another German thinker in this direction, Hamerling quotes Jacobi, Goethe’s contemporary: “Experience and history teach us that man’s action depends far less upon his thinking than his thinking depends upon his action, that his concepts direct themselves according to his actions and only copy them, as it were; that the path of knowledge, therefore, is a mysterious path, not a syllogistic one, nor a mechanical one.”

Because Hamerling, out of the prevailing tone of his soul, has a feeling for the fact that the accordance of an idea with reality must be added to its merely logical correctness, he also cannot regard those pessimistic philosophers’ views of



life as valid which wish to determine — by an abstract conceptual weighing — whether pleasure or pain predominates in life and therefore whether life must be regarded as a good or an evil. No, reflection become theory does not decide this; this is decided in much deeper foundations of life, in depths that have to judge this human reflection, but do not allow themselves to be judged by this reflection. Hamerling says about this: “The main thing is not whether people are correct in wanting to live, with very few exceptions, at any price, no matter whether things are going well or badly for them. The main thing is that they want it and this can by no means be denied. And yet the doctrinaire pessimists do not reckon with this decisive fact. Intellectually and in learned discussions, they always only weigh against each other the pleasure and pain life brings in particular situations; but since pleasure and pain belong to feeling, it is feeling and not intellect that ultimately and decisively draws up the balance between pleasure and pain. And, with respect to all mankind — indeed one can say with respect to everything living — the balance falls on the side of the pleasure of existence. That everything living wants to live, under any circumstances and at any price, this is the great fact; and in the face of this fact all doctrinaire talk is powerless.” In the same way as the thinkers from Fichte to Planck described in this book, Hamerling seeks the path into spiritual reality, except that his striving is to do justice to the natural-scientific picture of the world to a greater degree than

Schelling or Hegel, for example, were able to do. *Atomism of Will* nowhere offends against the scientific picture of the world. But this book is everywhere permeated with the insight that this picture of the world represents only a part of reality. This book is based upon an acknowledgement of the thought that a person is submitting to belief in an unreal world if he refuses to take up the forces of a spiritual world into his thought-world. (I use the word “unreal” here in the sense employed in our discussion of Planck.)

Hamerling’s satiric poem “Homunculus” speaks forcibly for the high degree to which his thinking was in accordance with reality. In this work, with great poetic force, he depicts a man who himself becomes soulless because soul and spirit do not speak to his knowledge. What would become of people who really stemmed from a world order such as the natural-scientific way of picturing things sets up as creed when it rejects a world view in accordance with the spirit? What would a man be if the unreality of this way of picturing things were real? In somewhat this way one could formulate the question that finds its artistic answer in “Homunculus.” Homunculism would have to take possession of a mankind that believed *only* in a world fashioned according to mechanistic natural laws. One can also see in Hamerling how a person striving toward existence’s ideas has a healthier sense for practical life than a person who, fearful of the spirit, shies away from the world of ideas and feels himself thereby to be a true “man

of reality.” Hamerling’s “Homunculus” could help those regain their health who, precisely in the present day, are allowing themselves to be led astray by the opinion that natural science is the only science of what is real. Such people, in their fear of the spirit, say that the idealism of our classical period — which, in their opinion, has been overcome today — brought knowing man (*homo sapiens*) too much into the foreground. “True science” must recognize that attention should be paid above all to economic man (*homo oeconomicus*) within the world order and in human arrangements. For such people “true science” means solely the science stemming from the natural-scientific way of picturing things. Homunculism arises out of opinions like this. The proponents of these opinions have no inkling of how they are hurrying toward homunculism. With the prophetic eye of the knower, Hamerling has delineated this homunculism. Those who fear that a rightful estimation of *homo sapiens* in Hamerling’s sense might lead to an overestimation of the literary approach will also be able to see from “Homunculus” that this does not occur.

## New Perspectives

The purpose of this book is to indicate germinal points in the world views of a series of thinkers from Fichte to Hamerling. The contemplation of these germinal points evokes a feeling that these thinkers drew from a source of spiritual experience from which much more can flow than they brought forth. What matters is not so much one's acceptance or rejection of what they expressed, but rather one's understanding of the *character* of their striving for knowledge and the *direction* of their path. One can then arrive at the view that there is something in this character and direction that is more promise than fulfillment. And yet it is a promise with innate power, bearing the guarantee of its fulfillment within itself.

Through this one gains a relationship to these thinkers that is not one of adherence to the dogmas of their world views, but rather one leading to the insight that: Upon the paths they took, there lie living powers for seeking knowledge that did not take effect in what they themselves recognized but that can lead out of and beyond it.

This need not mean returning to Fichte, Hegel, and the others in the hope that, by taking better paths from their starting points, one will thus arrive at better results.

No, that cannot be the point for us — to be “motivated” by

these thinkers in this way — but rather to gain access to the sources from which they drew and to recognize what still lies hidden within these sources as motivating powers, in spite of the work of these thinkers.

A look at the spirit of the modern, natural-scientific way of picturing things (*Vorstellungsart*) can make one feel how much the idealism in world views living in the above thinkers is a promise awaiting fulfillment.

Through its results in a certain direction, this natural scientific way of picturing things has demonstrated the efficacy of its cognitive means. One can already find this way of picturing things essentially prefigured in a thinker who was at work when its development began — in Galileo. (In his vice-chancellor's address to the Vienna University in 1894, the Austrian philosopher and Catholic priest Laurenz Müllner discussed the significance of Galileo in the most beautiful way.) What was already indicated by Galileo reappears, in an evolved state, in the directions taken by the research of the adherents of the modern natural-scientific way of thinking. This way of thinking has attained its significance by letting the world phenomena arising in the field of sense observation speak purely for themselves, within their own lawful interconnections, and by wishing to allow nothing of what the human soul experiences from these phenomena to flow into what this way of thinking admits as knowledge. No matter

what view one might hold about the natural-scientific picture of the world — whose fulfillment of the above cognitive demand is already possible or even achieved today — this cannot detract from one's recognition that this demand provides a sound basis for a valid picture of natural existence. If the adherent of an idealistic or spiritual-scientific world view takes a negative stance toward this demand today, he shows by this either that he does not understand the meanings of this demand, or that something of a natural-scientific way of picturing things are under the misconception that through such a world view something or other of the results of natural science is called into question.

To anyone who penetrates into the true meaning of modern natural science, it is clear that this science does not undermine knowledge of the spiritual world, but rather supports and ensures it. One will not be able to arrive at this clarity, however, by imagining oneself, through all kinds of theoretical arguments, to be an opponent of a knowledge of the spiritual world, but rather by turning one's gaze upon what makes the natural-scientific picture of the world sensible and meaningful. The natural-scientific way of picturing things excludes everything from what it studies that is experienced through the inner being of the human soul. It investigates how things and processes relate to each other. What the soul, through its inner being, can experience about things serves only to reveal how things are, irrespective of these inner

experiences. This is how the picture of purely natural occurrences comes about. This picture will in fact fulfill its task all the better, the more it succeeds in excluding this inner life. But one must now consider the characteristic traits of this picture. What one presents to oneself in this way as a picture of nature — precisely in the case where it fulfills the ideal of natural-scientific knowledge — cannot bear within itself anything that could ever be perceived by a human being nor any other soul being. The natural-scientific way of picturing things must provide a picture of the world that explains the relationship of natural facts but whose content would have to remain unperceivable. If the world actually were as pure natural science must picture it, then this world could never arise within a consciousness as a content of mental pictures. Hamerling is of the opinion: “Certain oscillations of the air produce sound in our ear. Sound, therefore, does not exist without an ear. A rifle shot, therefore, would not ring out if no one heard it.” Hamerling is wrong, because he has not grasped the determining factors of the natural-scientific picture of the world. If he did, he would say: When a sound arises, natural science must picture something that would not sound even if an ear were there ready to hear it sound. And natural science is acting correctly in this. In his lecture, “The Limits to Our Knowledge of Nature” (1872), the natural scientist, Du Bois-Reymond expresses himself quite aptly on this subject: “Silent and dark in itself, i.e., without any qualities” is the world for the view — gained by natural-

scientific study — which, “instead of sound and light, knows only oscillations of a primal substance, without qualities, that has turned into weigh able matter here and into unweighable matter there”; but to this he adds the statement: “God’s words in Moses’ depiction — ‘Let there be light’ — are physiologically incorrect. Light first came into existence when the first red ‘eyespot’ of an infusorian [euglena] distinguished light from darkness for the first time. Without optical and aural substance this world around us, glowing with color and filled with sound, would be dark and silent.” No, this second statement cannot be made by someone who in fact understands the full implications of the first. For, *this* world, whose picture is correctly sketched out by natural science, would remain “silent and dark” even when confronted by optical and aural substance. One fools oneself about this only because the real world, from which one has gained the picture of a “silent and dark” world, does not actually remain silent and dark when one perceives in it. But I should no more expect this picture to correspond to the real world than I would expect the portrait of a friend to step out of his picture as a real person. Just look at the matter from all sides, without preconceptions, and you will certainly find that if the world were as natural science depicts it, no being would ever experience anything about it. To be sure, the world pictured by natural science *is* there, in a certain way, within the reality from which man perceives his sense world; but lacking in this picture is everything by which it could be perceived by some



being. What this way of picturing things must posit as underlying light, sound, warmth does not shine, sound, or warm. Only by experience does one know that the pictures arrived at by this way of thinking were drawn from something shining, sounding, warming; one therefore lives in the belief that what one pictures is also something shining, sounding, and warming. This mistaken belief is the most difficult to penetrate when one is dealing with the sense of touch. There it *seems* to be enough that something material — precisely as something material — is spread out around us and, through its resistance, stimulates a tactile perception. But something material-spatial can also only exert pressure; the pressure, however, cannot be *felt*. What *seems* to be the case deceives us here the most. But one does have to do in fact only with what seems to be the case. What underlies tactile sensations also cannot be felt by touch. Let it be expressly stated here that we are not merely saying that the world lying behind sense impressions is in fact different from what our senses make out of it; we are emphasizing that the natural-scientific way of picturing things must think of this underlying world in such a way that our senses could make nothing out of it if it were in actuality as it was thought to be. From observation, natural science draws forth a world picture that through its own nature cannot be observed at all<sup>1</sup>.

What we are dealing with here came to light in a world historic moment of spiritual evolution: When Goethe, out of

the world view of German idealism that lay in his whole nature, rejected Newton's color theory. (For nearly three decades, the present writer has sought in various writings to draw attention to this decisive point in the assessment of Goethe's color theory. But what he said in an 1893 lecture in Frankfurt's "Independent German Academy" still holds good today: "The time will come when even for this question the scientific prerequisites for an understanding among scientists will be present. Today, precisely the investigations of physics are heading in a direction that cannot lead to Goethean thinking.")

Goethe understood that Newton's color theory could provide a picture representing only a world that is not luminous and does not shine forth in colors. Since Goethe did not involve himself in the demands of a purely natural-scientific world picture, his actual opposition to Newton went astray in many places. But the main thing is that he had a correct feeling for the fundamental issue. When a person, by means of light, observes colors, he is confronting a different world from the only one Newton is able to describe. And Goethe does observe the real world of colors. But if one enters a realm such as this — whether of colors or of other natural phenomena — one needs other ideas than those depicted in the "dark and silent world" imagined by the natural-scientific way of picturing things. In this picture, no reality is depicted that can be perceived. *Real* nature simply

does in fact already contain within itself something that cannot be included in this picture. The “dark world” of the physicist could not be perceived by any eye; light is already spiritual. Within the sense-perceptible the spiritual holds sway<sup>2</sup>. To wish to grasp this spiritual with the means of natural science is committing the same error as someone who demands of himself as a painter that he paint a man who can walk around in the world. For Goethe, even as a physicist, the ground on which he moved was the spiritual. The world view for which he used the term “in accordance with the spirit” (*geistgemäss*) made it impossible for him to find in Newton’s color theory anything in the way of ideas about real light and real colors. But with the natural scientific way of picturing things, one does not find the spirit in the sense world. That the world view of German idealism had a correct feeling about this is one of its essential characteristics. It may be that what one or another personality has said out of this feeling is only a first germ of a complete plant; but the germ is there and bears within itself the power to unfold. But to this insight — that in the sense world there is spirit which cannot be grasped by the natural-scientific way of picturing things — another insight must be added: modern natural science has already demonstrated, or is on its way to demonstrating, the dependency of ordinary human soul life — running its course in the sense world — upon the instrument of the body. One enters a realm here in which, as though by entirely obvious objections, one can seemingly be refuted in a crushing way if one declares one’s

belief in the existence of an independent spiritual world. For what could be clearer than that man's soul life, from childhood on, unfolds as the physical organs develop and declines to the extent that the organs age? What is clearer than that the crippling of certain parts of the brain also causes the loss of certain spiritual abilities? What seems clearer, therefore, than that everything of a soul-spiritual nature is bound to matter and without it can have no continued existence, at least not one about which man knows? One does not even need to take counsel on this from the brilliant results of modern natural science; De la Mettrie, in his book *Man: A Machine* (*L'homme Machine*) written in 1746, has already expressed in a sufficiently correct way what is so self-evident in this assertion. This French thinker says: "Since a feeble-minded person, as one can usually observe, does not lack brains, his problem must be due to the faulty nature of this organ, its excessive softness, for example. The same applies to imbeciles; the flaws in their brains do not always remain hidden to our investigation; but if the causes of feeble-mindedness, imbecility, and so on are not always recognizable, where should one seek the causes for differences between all human spirits? These causes would escape lynx and Argus eyes. A nothing, a tiny fiber, a thing that even the finest anatomy cannot discover would have turned Erasmus and Fontenelle into two fools — an observation that Fontenelle himself makes in one of his best dialogues." Now, the adherent of a world view in accordance

with the spirit would show little insight if he did not acknowledge the telling and obvious force of such an assertion. He can take this assertion even further and say: Would the world ever have received what Erasmus's spirit accomplished if someone had killed him when he was still a child?

If a world view in accordance with the spirit ever had to resort to denying such obvious facts or even to belittling their significance, it would be in a bad way. But such a world view can be rooted in ground that no materialistic objection can take away from it.

Human soul experience, as it manifests in thinking, feeling, and willing, is at first bound to the bodily instruments. And this experience takes shape in ways determined by these instruments. If someone asserts, however, that when he observes the manifestations of the soul through the body he is seeing the real life of the soul, he is then caught up in the same error as someone who believes that *his actual form* is brought forth by the mirror in front of him just because the mirror possesses the necessary prerequisites through which his *image* appears. Within certain limits this image, as image, is indeed dependent upon the form of the mirror, etc; *but what this image represents* has nothing to do with the mirror. In order fully to fulfill its essential being within the sense world, human soul life must have an *image* of its being. It must have

this image in *consciousness*; otherwise it would indeed have an existence, but no picture, no knowledge of it. This *image*, now, that lives in the ordinary consciousness of the soul is fully determined by the bodily instruments. Without these, the image would not be there, just as the mirror image would not be there without the mirror. *But what appears through this image*, the soul element itself, is — in its essential being — no more dependent upon the bodily instruments than the person standing before the mirror is dependent upon the mirror. The soul is not dependent upon the bodily instruments; only the *ordinary consciousness* of the soul is so. The materialistic view of the human soul succumbs to a deception caused by the fact that ordinary consciousness, which is only there through the bodily instruments, is mistaken for the soul itself. The essential being of the soul flows just as little into this ordinary consciousness as my essential being flows into my mirror image. This essential being of the soul, therefore, also cannot be found in *ordinary* consciousness; it must be *experienced outside* of this consciousness. And it can be experienced, for the human being can develop a different consciousness within himself than the one determined by the bodily instruments.

Eduard von Hartmann, a thinker who has come forth from the world view of German idealism, has clearly recognized that ordinary consciousness is an outcome of the bodily instruments, and that the soul itself is not contained within this

consciousness. But he did not recognize that the soul can develop a different consciousness, which is not dependent upon the bodily instruments, and through which the soul can experience itself. Therefore he believed that this soul-being lay within an unconscious element about which one can only make mental pictures by drawing conclusions, from ordinary consciousness, about a “thing-in-itself” — that itself actually remains unknown — of the soul. But in this, like many of his predecessors, Hartmann has stopped short before the threshold that must be crossed if a well-founded knowledge of the spiritual world is to be attained. One cannot cross this threshold, in fact, if one is afraid to give one’s soul forces a completely different direction than they take under the influence of our ordinary consciousness. The soul experiences its own essential being within this consciousness only in the images produced for it by the bodily instruments. If the soul could experience only in this way, it would be in a situation comparable to that of a being who stands before a mirror and can see only its image, but can experience nothing about itself. The moment this being became livingly manifest to itself, however, it would enter into an entirely different relationship to its mirror image than before.

A person who cannot resolve to discover something different in his soul life than is offered him by ordinary consciousness will either deny that the essential being of the soul can be known, or will flatly declare that this being is

produced by the body.

One stands here before another barrier that the natural-scientific way of picturing things must erect, out of its own thoroughly justified demands. The first barrier resulted from the fact that these demands must sketch the picture of a world that could never enter a consciousness through perception. The second barrier arises because natural-scientific thinking must rightly declare that the experiences of ordinary consciousness come about through the bodily instruments and therefore, in reality, contain nothing of any soul. It is entirely understandable that modern thinking feels itself placed between these two barriers, and out of scientific conscientiousness, doubts the possibility of arriving at a knowledge of a real spiritual world that can be attained neither through the picture of a “silent and dark” nature, nor through the phenomena of ordinary consciousness, which are dependent upon the body. And whoever — merely from some dim feeling or out of a hazy mysticism — believes himself able to be convinced of the existence of a spiritual world would do better to acquaint himself with the difficult situation of modern thinking than to rail against the “raw, crude” mental pictures of natural science.

One gets beyond what the natural-scientific way of picturing things can give only when one experiences in the inner life of the soul that there is an awakening out of ordinary



consciousness; an awakening to a soul experience of a kind and direction that relates to the world of ordinary consciousness the way the latter relates to the picture-world of dreams. Goethe speaks in his way about awakening out of ordinary consciousness and calls the soul faculty thus acquired “the power to judge *in beholding*”. (*anschauende Urteilskraft*)<sup>3</sup>. In Goethe’s view, this power to judge in beholding grants the soul the ability to *behold* that which, as the higher reality of things, conceals itself from the cognition of ordinary consciousness. In his affirmation of this human ability, Goethe placed himself in opposition to Kant, who had denied to man any “power to judge in beholding,” Goethe knew from the experience of his own soul life, however, that an awakening of ordinary consciousness into one with the power to judge in *beholding* is possible. Kant believed he had to designate any such awakening as an “adventure of reason,” Goethe replied to this ironically: “Since I had, after all, ceaselessly pressed on, at first unconsciously and out of an inner urge, toward that primal archetypal element, since I had even succeeded in building up a presentation of this which was in accordance with nature, nothing more could keep me then from courageously undertaking the *adventure of reason*, as the old man of Königsberg himself calls it,” (The “old man of Königsberg” is Kant, For Goethe’s view on this, see my edition of Goethe’s natural-scientific works<sup>4</sup>. In what follows now the awakened consciousness will be called a *seeing consciousness (schauendes Bewusstsein)*. This kind

of awakening can occur only when one develops a different relationship to the world of thoughts and will than is experienced in ordinary consciousness. It is entirely understandable today that the significance of such an awakening would be regarded with mistrust. For, what has made the natural-scientific way of picturing things great is the fact that it has opposed the claims of any dim mysticism. And although only that awakening in consciousness has validity as spiritual-scientific research which leads into realms of ideas of mathematical clarity and consistency, people who wish to arrive in an easy way at convictions about the greatest questions of world existence confuse this valid awakening with their own mystical muddle-headedness, which they claim is based on true spiritual research. Out of the fear that any pointing to an “awakening of the soul” could lead to such mystical muddle-headedness, and through seeing the knowledge often presented by such mystical illuminati, people acquainted with the demands of the modern natural-scientific way of picturing things keep aloof from any research that wishes, by claiming an “awakened consciousness,” to enter the spiritual world<sup>5</sup>. Now such an awakening is altogether possible, however, through one’s developing, in inner (soul) experience, a certain activation differing from the usual — of the powers of one’s soul being (thought and will experiences). The indication that with the idea of the awakened consciousness one is continuing in the direction taken by Goethe’s world view can show that our study here wishes to

have nothing to do with the mental pictures of any muddled mysticism. Through an inner strengthening, one can lift oneself out of the state of ordinary consciousness and in doing so experience something similar to the transition from dreaming into wakeful mental picturing. Whoever passes from dreaming into a waking state experiences how will penetrates into the course of his mental pictures, whereas in dreaming he is given over to the course of his dream pictures without his own will involvement. What occurs through unconscious processes when one awakens from sleep can be effected on a different level by conscious soul activity. The human being can bring a stronger exercise of will into his ordinary conscious thinking than is present there in his usual experience of the physical world. Through this he can pass over from thinking to an *experience of thinking*. In ordinary consciousness, thinking is not experienced; rather, through thinking, one experiences what is thought. But there is an inner work the soul can do that gradually brings one to the point of living, not in what is thought, but rather in the very activity of thinking itself. A thought that is not simply received from the ordinary course of life but rather is placed into one's consciousness *with will* in order that one experience it in its thought nature: such a thought releases different forces in the soul than one that is evoked by the presence of outer impressions or by the ordinary course of one's soul life. And when, ever anew within itself, the soul rouses that devotion<sup>6</sup> — practiced only to a small degree, in fact, in ordinary life —

to thoughts as such, when the soul concentrates upon thoughts as thoughts: then it discovers within itself powers that are not employed in ordinary life but remain slumbering (latent), as it were. These are powers that are discovered only through conscious use. But they predispose the soul to an experience not present before their discovery. The thoughts fill themselves with a life all their own, which the thinking (meditating) person feels to be connected with his own soul being. (What is meant here by “seeing consciousness” does not arise from ordinary waking consciousness through bodily [physiological] processes the way ordinary waking consciousness arises from dream consciousness. In the awakening from this latter consciousness into day consciousness, one has to do with a changing engagement [*Einstellung*] of the body relative to outer reality. In the awakening from ordinary consciousness into seeing consciousness, one has to do with a changing engagement of one’s soul-spiritual way of picturing things relative to a spiritual world.)

For this discovery of the life in thoughts, however, the expenditure of conscious will is necessary. But this cannot simply be *that* will which appears in ordinary consciousness. The will must also become engaged in a different way and in a different direction, so to speak, than for experience in mere sense-perceptible existence. In ordinary life one feels oneself to be at the center of what one wills or what one wants. For

even in wanting, a kind of held-back will is at work. The will streams out from the “I” and down into desire, into bodily movement, into one’s action. A will in this direction is ineffective for the soul’s awakening out of ordinary consciousness. But there is also a direction of will that in a certain sense is the opposite of this. It is at work when, without any direct look at an outer result, a person seeks to direct his own “I.” This direction of the will manifests in a person’s efforts to shape his thinking into something meaningful and to improve upon his feelings, and in all his impulses of self-education. In a gradual intensification of the will forces present in a person in this direction there lies what he needs in order to awaken out of his ordinary consciousness. One can particularly help oneself in pursuit of this goal by observing the life of nature with inner heart’s (*Gemüt*) involvement. One seeks, for example, to look at a plant in such a way that one not only takes up its form into one’s thoughts, but also, as it were, feels along with its inner life, which stretches upward in the stem, spreads out in the leaves, opens what is inside to what is outside with its blossom, and so on. In such thinking the will is also present in gentle resonance; and there, will is a will that is developed in devotion and that guides the soul; a will that does not originate from the soul, but rather directs its activity upon the soul. At first, one quite naturally believes that this will originates in the soul. In experiencing the process itself, however, one recognizes that through this reversal of the will,

a spiritual element, existing outside the soul, is grasped by the soul.

When will is strengthened in this direction and grasps a person's thought-life in the way indicated, then, in actual fact, out of the circumference of his ordinary consciousness, another consciousness arises that relates to his ordinary one like this ordinary consciousness relates to a weaving in dream pictures. And this kind of a seeing consciousness is in a position to experience and know the spiritual world. (In a series of earlier books, the author of this work has presented in a more detailed way what is only indicated here briefly, as it were. In such a short presentation, objections, misgivings, etc., cannot be taken up; this has been done in my other books; and there one can find many things presented that provide the deeper foundations for what is expressed here. The titles of the relevant books are listed at the end of this book<sup>7</sup>.

A will that does not tend in the direction just indicated, but rather toward everyday desiring, wishing, and so on, cannot — when this will is brought to bear upon one's thought-life in the way described — lead to the awakening of a seeing consciousness out of the ordinary one; it can lead only to a dimming down of this ordinary consciousness into waking dreams, phantasmagoria, visionary states, and such like.

The processes that lead to what is meant here by a seeing consciousness are entirely of a soul-spiritual nature; and their very description protects what is attained by them from being confused with pathological states (visions, mediumism, ecstasies, and so on). All these pathological states push consciousness down beneath the level it assumes in the waking human being who can fully employ his healthy physical soul organs<sup>8</sup>.

It has often been indicated in this book how the science of the soul developed under the influence of the modern natural-scientific way of picturing things has moved away entirely from the significant questions of soul life. Eduard von Hartmann has written a book, *Modern Psychology*, in which he presents a history of the science of the soul in the second half of the nineteenth century. He states there: "Modern psychologists either leave aside the question of man's free will (*Freiheit*) entirely, or occupy themselves with it, in fact, only so far as is necessary to show that, on a strictly deterministic basis, just that amount of practical freedom arises which suffices for judicial and moral responsibility. Only in the first half of the period under discussion do a few theistic philosophers still adhere both to the immortality of a self-conscious soul substance and also to a residue of undeterministic freedom; but mostly they are content with wanting to found the scientific possibility of their heart's wish." Now, from the point of view of the natural-scientific way of

picturing things, one can actually speak neither about the true freedom of the human soul nor about the question of human immortality. With respect to this latter question, let us recall once more the words of the significant psychologist Franz Brentano: "The laws of mental association, of the development of convictions and opinions, and of the germinating of pleasure and love, all these would be anything but a true compensation for not gaining certainty about the hopes of a Plato and Aristotle for the continued existence of our better part after the dissolution of the body. ... And if the modern way of thinking really did signify the elimination of the question of immortality, then this elimination would have to be called an extremely portentous one for psychology:" Now for the natural-scientific way of thinking, only ordinary consciousness is present. This consciousness, however, in its entirety, is dependent upon the bodily organs. When these fall away at death, our ordinary kind of consciousness also falls away. But seeing consciousness, which has awakened out of this ordinary consciousness, can approach the question of immortality. Strange as this may seem to a way of picturing things that wishes to remain merely within natural science, this seeing consciousness experiences itself within a spiritual world in which the soul has an existence outside the body. Just as awakening from a dream gives one the consciousness that one is no longer given over to a stream of pictures without one's own will involvement, but now stands connected through one's senses with a real outer world, so the



awakening into seeing consciousness gives one the direct and experienced certainty that one stands, with one's essential being, within a spiritual world, and that one experiences and knows oneself in something which is independent of the body, something which actually is the soul organism inferred by Immanuel Hermann Fichte, which belongs to a spiritual world and must still belong to it after the destruction of the body.

And since, in seeing consciousness, one becomes familiar with a consciousness rooted in the spiritual world and therefore different from ordinary consciousness, one can no longer revert to the opinion — because our ordinary kind of consciousness must indeed fall away along with its bodily instruments — that with the destruction of the body all consciousness must cease. In a spiritual science that regards the seeing consciousness as a source of knowledge, something becomes reality of which — out of the idealism of German world views — the school director of Bloomberg, Johann Heinrich Reinhardt, had inklings (see pages 54ff. of this book): that it is possible to know how the soul, “in this life already, is elaborating the new body” that it will then carry over the threshold of death into the spiritual world. (To speak of a “body” in this connection sounds materialistic; for, what is meant of course is precisely the soul-spiritual element that is free of the body; but it is necessary in such cases to apply to something spiritual names taken from what is sense-

perceptible, in order to indicate sharply that one means something spiritually real, not just a conceptual abstraction.)

Relative to the question of human freedom<sup>9</sup>, a particular conflict in our knowledge of the soul presents itself. Ordinary consciousness knows free human resolve as an inwardly experienced fact. Faced with this experience, ordinary consciousness cannot actually let any teaching take this freedom away from it. And yet it seems as though the natural-scientific way of picturing things could not acknowledge this experience. For every effect it seeks the causes. What I do in this moment seems to it dependent upon the impressions I have now, upon my memories, upon my inborn and acquired inclinations, and so on. Many things are working together; I cannot survey them all, therefore I appear free to myself. But the truth is that I am determined in my action by the working together of all these causes. Freedom would therefore appear to be an illusion. One does not escape this conflict as long as, from the standpoint of seeing consciousness, one does not regard ordinary consciousness as only a mirroring — effected by the bodily organization — of the true soul processes, and as long as one does not regard the soul as a being rooted in the spiritual world and independent of the body. Something that is merely a *picture* can, through itself, effect nothing. If something is effected by a picture, then this must occur through an entity that lets itself be determined by the picture. But the human soul is in this situation when it does something

for which its only motivation is a thought present in ordinary consciousness. The image of myself that I see in a mirror effects nothing that I, with the image as motivation, do not effect. The matter is different when a person does not act according to a conscious thought but rather is driven, more or less unconsciously, by an emotion, or impulse of passion, while his conscious mental life only looks on, as it were, at the blind complex of driving forces.

Since it is therefore the *conscious* thoughts in man's ordinary consciousness that allow him to act freely, he could after all know nothing through ordinary consciousness about his freedom. He would only look at the picture that determines his action and would have to ascribe to it a causal power. He does not do this, because instinctively, in his experience of inner freedom, the true being of the soul shines into ordinary consciousness. (The author of this book, in his *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Philosophie der Freiheit)*, has sought to shed light upon the question of human freedom in a detailed way out of the observation of human soul experiences.) Spiritual science seeks, from the point of view of seeing consciousness, to shed light into that realm of the true soul life from which the instinctive certainty of man's inner freedom streams into ordinary consciousness.

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Man experiences the picture-world of dreams through the fact that the level of life possessed by him in the sense world is toned down. A person with healthy thinking will not seek instruction from dreaming consciousness about waking consciousness; rather, he will make waking consciousness the judge over the world of his dream pictures. A spiritual science that takes the point of view of seeing consciousness thinks in a similar way about the relationship of seeing consciousness to ordinary consciousness. Through a spiritual science such as this, one recognizes that the material world and its processes are in truth only a part of a comprehensive spiritual world, of a spiritual world that lies behind the sense world in the same way the world of sense perceptible material processes and substances lies behind the picture-world of dreams. And one recognizes how the human being descends into sense existence out of a spiritual world; and how this sense existence itself is a manifestation of spiritual being and spiritual processes. It is understandable that many people, out of their habitual thinking, scorn a world view such as this because they consider it estranged from reality and because they believe it makes them less fit for life. It frightens such people to hear that, compared with a higher reality, ordinary reality has something dreamlike about it. But does anything about dream consciousness change through our seeking — from the vantage point of waking consciousness — to understand its nature in reality? A person with a superstitious relationship to his dream-pictures can cloud his judgment in

waking consciousness thereby. But our waking judgment can never damage our dreams. In the same way, the adherent of a world view that does not wish to gain entry into the spiritual world can cloud his judgment about the spiritual world; but genuine insight into the spiritual world cannot adversely affect our true assessment of the physical world. Seeing consciousness, therefore, cannot reach disruptively into our life of ordinary consciousness; seeing consciousness will affect it only in a clarifying way.

Only a world view that acknowledges the point of view of seeing consciousness will be able to bring the same understanding both to the modern natural-scientific way of picturing things and to the cognitive goals of modern idealism in world views that works toward knowing the essential being of the world as something spiritual. (Further elaborations on the subject of knowledge of the spiritual world are not possible within the limits of this book. The author must therefore refer the reader to his other works. His purpose here is only to present the basic character of a world view that acknowledges the viewpoint of seeing consciousness insofar as is necessary to indicate the value for life of German idealism in world views.)

The natural-scientific way of picturing things is justified precisely through the fact that the viewpoint of seeing consciousness is valid. The natural scientist and thinker

bases his cognitive work on the presupposition that this viewpoint is possible, even though, as a theoretical observer of his own world picture, he will not admit this. Only those theoreticians fail to see this who declare the world picture of the natural-scientific way of picturing things to be the only one justified in a world view. Theoretician and scientist can of course be combined in one person. For our seeing consciousness, sense-perceptions undergo something similar to what dream-pictures undergo when a person wakes up out of sleep. The working powers that bring about a world of pictures when he is dreaming must give way, when he wakes up, to those working powers by which he makes for himself pictures and mental pictures that he knows are conditional upon the reality surrounding him. When seeing consciousness awakens, a person ceases to think his mental pictures in terms of this reality; he knows now that he pictures things in terms of the spiritual world surrounding him. Just as dream consciousness regards its picture-world as reality and knows nothing of the environment of waking consciousness, so ordinary consciousness regards the material world as reality and knows nothing of the spiritual world. The natural scientist, however, seeks a picture of that world which manifests in the mental pictures of ordinary consciousness. But this world cannot be contained in the mental pictures of ordinary consciousness. To seek it there would be like expecting one day to dream what a dream is in its essential nature. (Thinkers like Ernst Mach and others, in fact, foundered on

the obstacle indicated here.) As soon as the natural scientist begins to understand his own way of research, he cannot believe that his ordinary consciousness can enter into a relationship with the world that he depicts. In actuality, seeing consciousness enters into this kind of a relationship. But this relationship is a spiritual one. And the sense perception of ordinary consciousness is the *revelation* of a spiritual relationship that plays itself out — beyond this ordinary consciousness — between the soul and the world the natural scientist depicts. This relationship can only first be seen by our seeing consciousness. If the world depicted by the natural-scientific way of picturing things is thought of as material, it remains incomprehensible; if it is thought of in such a way that something spiritual is living in it which, as something spiritual, speaks to the human spirit in a way that can be known only by our seeing consciousness, then this picture of the world becomes comprehensible in its full validity. Ancient Indian mysticism is a kind of counterpart to the natural-scientific way of picturing things. Whereas natural science depicts a world that is unperceivable, Indian mysticism depicts one in which the knower does indeed want to experience something spiritual, but does not want to intensify this experience to the point of having the power to perceive. The knower does not seek there, through the power of soul experiences, to awaken out of ordinary consciousness into a seeing consciousness; rather, he withdraws from all reality in order to be alone with his knowing activity. He

*believes*, in this way, to have overcome the reality that disturbs him, whereas he has only withdrawn his consciousness from it, and, as it were, let it stand outside himself with its difficulties and riddles. He also believes himself to have become free of his “I” and, through selfless devotion to the spiritual world, to have become one with that world. The truth is that he has only darkened his consciousness of his “I” and is living unconsciously, in fact, altogether in his “I.” Instead of awakening out of ordinary consciousness, he falls back into a dreamlike consciousness. He believes himself to have solved the riddles of existence, whereas he is only holding his soul gaze averted from them. He has the contented feeling of knowledge, because he no longer feels the riddles of knowledge weighing upon him. What a knowing “perceiving” is can be experienced only in knowing the sense world. If it has been experienced *there*, then it can be further developed for spiritual perceiving. If a person withdraws from this kind of perceiving, he robs himself entirely of the experience of perception and takes himself back to a level of soul experience that is less real than sense perception. He regards not-knowing as a kind of deliverance from knowing and believes that, precisely through this, he is living in a higher spiritual state. He falls into merely living in the “I” and believes himself to have overcome the “I” because he has dimmed down his consciousness that he is weaving entirely within the “I.” Only the finding of his “I” can free the human being from ensnarement by his “I.” (See also the



discussions on pages 117ff. of this book [Hamerling begins in an entirely Kantian way: ...]) One can truly have to say all this, and yet have no less understanding and admiration for the magnificent creation of the Bhagavad-Gita and similar productions of Indian mysticism than someone who regards what has been said here as proof that the speaker has “no organ, in fact,” for the sublimity of genuine mysticism. But one should not believe that only the unreserved *adherents* of a world view know how to value it. (I write this in spite of my awareness that I experience no less from Indian mysticism than any of its unreserved adherents.)

What Johann Gottlieb Fichte brings to expression lies in the direction of a knowledge relating to the world in the way characterized here. This is clear from the way he has to use the image of human dreaming in order to characterize the world of ordinary consciousness. He says: “Pictures exist: they are all that there is, and they know about themselves in the manner of pictures — Pictures that float past; without anything there for them to float past; pictures that relate to each other through pictures of pictures ... All reality transforms itself into a strange dream, without a life that is dreamed about, and without a spirit who is dreaming; transforms itself into a dream that is connected with a dream about itself.” That is a description of the world of ordinary consciousness; and it is the *starting point for a recognition* of the seeing consciousness which brings an awakening out of

the dream of the physical world into the reality of the spiritual world.

Schelling wishes to regard nature as a stage in the evolution of the spirit. He demands that nature be known through an intellectual beholding. He therefore takes a direction whose goal can be seen only from the point of view of seeing consciousness. He takes note of the point where, in his consciousness of inner freedom (*Freiheit*), the seeing consciousness shines into ordinary consciousness. He seeks finally to go beyond the mere idealism in his *Philosophy of Revelation* by recognizing that ideas themselves can only be pictures of something, out of a spiritual world, that has a relationship with the human soul.

Hegel senses that within man's thought-world there lies something through which man expresses not only what he experiences from nature, but also what the spirit of nature itself experiences *in him and through him*. Hegel feels that man can become the spiritual onlooker of a world process playing itself out within him. Lifting what he thus senses and feels up to the point of view of seeing consciousness also lifts man's world picture — which for Hegel is only a reflecting upon the processes that occur in the physical world — up to the beholding of a real spiritual world.

Karl Christian Planck recognizes that the thoughts of

ordinary consciousness do not themselves participate in the working of the world, because, correctly viewed, they are *pictures* of a life; they themselves are not this life, Therefore, Planck is of the view that precisely the person who rightly understands this pictorial nature of thinking can find reality. Insofar as thinking wishes to be nothing itself but speaks about something that is, thinking points to a true reality.

Thinkers like Troxler and Immanuel Hennarm Fichte take up into themselves the forces of German idealism in world views without limiting themselves to the views that this idealism brought forth in Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Troxler and I.H. Fichte point already to an “inner man” within the “outer man,” to a spirit-soul man, therefore, which the viewpoint of seeing consciousness recognizes as an experienceable reality.

The significance of the viewpoint of seeing consciousness is particularly clear when one considers that tendency in world views which, as the modern teaching of evolution, stretches from Lamarck, through Lyell and others, to Darwin and the present-day view of life. This evolutionary teaching seeks to portray the ascent of the higher life forms out of the lower ones. It thereby fulfills a fundamentally valid task. But, in so doing, it must act the same way the human soul does, in dreaming consciousness, when dealing with dream experiences; it lets the later go forth from the earlier. In

*actuality*, however, the motive forces that conjure a subsequent dream picture out of the previous one are to be sought within the dreamer and not within the dream pictures. Only seeing consciousness is in a position to sense this. Seeing consciousness, therefore, can no more consent to seeking in a lower life form the forces that cause a higher one to arise than waking consciousness can consider one dream really to emerge from the preceding one without considering the dreamer. While experiencing itself within true reality, man's soul being observes the soul-spiritual element that it sees working in present human nature as also working already in the evolutionary forms that led up to the present human being. This soul being will not anthropomorphically dream the present human entity into the phenomena of nature; but it will know that the soul-spiritual element that seeing consciousness experiences within present-day man is at work in all the natural happenings that have led up to man. Its knowledge will be such that the spiritual world becoming manifest to the human being also contains the origins of the natural configurations that preceded man. This represents a correct development of what Wilhelm Heinrich Preuss — out of the motive forces of German idealism — was striving for in his teaching which “rescues the concept of species insofar as is factually possible, but at the same time transfers the concept of evolution set up by Darwin into its realm and seeks to make it fruitful.” From the point of view of seeing consciousness, one cannot indeed say what Preuss said:

“Now the center of this new teaching is man: the species *homo sapiens* that appears only once upon our planet”; rather, the center of a world view that encompasses human reality is the spiritual world that reveals itself within man. And seen in this way, what Preuss believes seems true: “Strange that earlier observers started with the objects of nature and then went so far astray that they did not find the path to man, which even Darwin in fact achieved only in a most sorry and thoroughly unsatisfactorily way by seeking the progenitor of the lord of creation among the animals, — whereas, the natural scientist would have to start with himself as human being in order, proceeding through the whole realm of existence and thinking, to return again to mankind. ...”

The viewpoint of seeing consciousness cannot lead to an anthropomorphical interpretation of natural phenomena, for it recognizes a spiritual reality of which what appears in man is just as much the revelation as what appears in nature. This anthropomorphic dreaming of the human entity into nature was a forbidding specter for Feuerbach and the Feuerbachians. This forbidding specter became for them the obstacle to their recognition of a spiritual reality.

This forbidding specter worked on also in Carneri's activity as a thinker. It crept in disruptively when he sought the relationship of his ethical view of life, which was based upon the soul being of man, to the Darwinistically tinged view of

nature. But the motive forces of German idealism in world views drowned out this disruption, and so it came about that he started with the soul-spiritual element in man, which is ethically predisposed, and, proceeding through the whole realm of existence and thinking, returned again to a mankind that is perfecting itself ethically.

The direction taken by German idealism in world views cannot flow into any acknowledgment of a teaching that dreams unspiritual motive forces into the evolution of higher forms of existence out of lower ones. For this reason, Hegel already had to say: "Thinking observation must rid itself of these nebulous mental pictures, which are basically taken from perception, — especially such pictures as the so-called *emergence* of plants and animals from the water, for example, and then the *emergence* of more developed animal organizations out of lower ones, and so on."

And the feelings with which Herman Grimm assigns the natural-scientific world picture its place in man's larger world view are born from this idealism in world views. Herman Grimm, the brilliant art historian, the stimulating portrayer of great interrelationships in the history of mankind, did not like to express himself on questions relative to world views; he preferred to leave this realm to others. But when he did speak about these things, he did so out of the direct sense of his own personality. With respect to his judgments, he felt secure

in that field of judgment which encompassed the German idealistic world view and upon which he knew he stood. And from foundations of his soul like these there came the words he spoke in his twenty-third lecture on Goethe: “Long before, already in his (Goethe’s) youth, the great Laplace-Kant fantasy about the rise and eventual downfall of our globe had taken effect. Out of the rotating world mist-children already get this in school — a central drop of gas takes shape from which the earth afterwards arises and, as a solidifying globe, through inconceivable ages of time, passes through all its phases — including the episode of its habitation by the human race — in order finally, as burnt-out slag, to plunge back into the sun; a long process — but fully comprehensible to the public — needing for its realization no further input from outside than the efforts of some external power or other to maintain the sun at the same temperature. — A more barren perspective for the future cannot be conceived than this expectation, supposedly forced upon us today by scientific necessity. A carrion bone, avoided even by a hungry dog, would be a refreshing and appetizing morsel compared to this final excrement of creation, the earth, as they picture it ultimately falling prey again to the sun; and the intellectual curiosity with which our generation takes up such things and professes to believe them is one sign of a sick imagination that scholars of future ages will one day have to expend much keen thought to explain as a historical phenomenon of our time. — Never did Goethe allow such bleak prospects to enter

... Goethe would have taken good care not to draw the conclusions of the Darwinian school from what he first discovered from nature in this direction and then expressed.” (With respect to Goethe’s relationship to the natural-scientific way of picturing things, see my introductions to Goethe’s natural-scientific writings in Kürschner’s “German National Literature” and my book *Goethe’s World View*<sup>10</sup>.

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Robert Hamerling’s reflections also move in a direction that finds its justification in the viewpoint of seeing consciousness. From the human “I” that thinks itself, he leads his observation over to the “I” that experiences itself in thinking; from the will that works in man, he leads his observation over to the world-will. But the “I” that experiences itself can only be seen when, in soul experience, an awakening within spiritual reality occurs; and the world-will penetrates into our knowledge only when the human “I,” in experience, grasps a willing in which the “I”, does not make itself a point of departure but rather an end point, a goal, in which it directs itself toward unfolding what occurs within the world of one’s inner life. Then the soul lives into the spiritual reality in which the motive forces of nature’s development can also be experienced in their actual being, Passages from his *Atomism of Will* like the following show how Hamerling’s reflections lead to a sense that one is justified in speaking of this kind of awakening of the “I” that



knows itself to be within the spiritual world: “In the half-light of bold mysticism and in the light of free speculation, this riddle, this wonder, this mysterious ‘I,’ interprets and grasps itself as one of the countless forms of manifestation in which infinite *being* (*Sein*) attains *reality*, and without which the ‘I’ would be only a nothing, a shadow,” And: “To want to trace a thought in the human brain back to the activity of thoroughly lifeless, material atoms remains for all time a vain and foolish undertaking. *Material atoms could never become the bearers of a thought if there did not already lie within them something that is of the same nature as the thought.* And this original something, which is related in nature to living thinking, is also without a doubt the atoms’ true core, their true self, their true being (*Sein*),” With this thought, Hamerling does confront the viewpoint of seeing consciousness, but with mere *inklings* of it. Certainly, to want to trace the thoughts of the human brain back to the activity of material atoms does remain “for all time a vain and foolish undertaking,” For this is no better than wanting to trace back the mirror image of a person merely to the activity of the mirror. But in ordinary consciousness thoughts appear, after all, as the mirroring — determined by the material element of the brain — of something living and full of being that works with power in these thoughts. but *unconsciously* as far as ordinary consciousness is concerned. Only from the viewpoint of seeing consciousness does this “something” first become comprehensible. It is that real element in which seeing consciousness experiences itself,

and to which also the material element of the brain relates like a picture does to the being that is pictured. On the one hand the viewpoint of seeing consciousness seeks to overcome the “half-light of bold mysticism” by the clarity of a thinking that is logically consistent in itself and that has full insight into itself; on the other hand, it seeks to overcome the unreal (abstract) thinking of philosophical “speculation” by a cognitive activity that in thinking is at the same time the experiencing of something real.

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Understanding for the experiences undergone by the human soul through the way of picturing things that manifests in the series of thinkers from Fichte to Hamerling will prevent a world view that regards the viewpoint of seeing consciousness as justified from falling back into attitudes of soul that, like the ancient Indian, seek an awakening into spiritual reality more through a dimming down of ordinary consciousness than through an intensification of it. (As the author of this book has indicated again and again in his books and lectures: *that* belief has gone astray which maintains that a *modern* person can gain anything for spiritual knowledge by reviving such older directions in world views as the Indian one; to be sure, this has not kept people from repeatedly confusing the spiritual-scientific world view advocated by him with such fruitless, anti-historical attempts at revival.)

German idealism in world views does not strive for a dimming down of consciousness, but rather, within this consciousness, seeks the roots of those soul powers that are strong enough to penetrate, with full experience of the “I,” into spiritual reality. In German idealism the spiritual evolution of mankind has taken up into itself the striving, through strengthening the powers of consciousness, to arrive at knowledge of the world riddles. But the natural-scientific way of picturing things, which has led many people into error about the carrying power of this idealistic stream, can also acquire enough freedom from bias to recognize the paths to knowledge of the real world that lie in the directions sought by this idealistic world view. One will misunderstand both the viewpoint of German idealism in world views and that of seeing consciousness if one hopes through them to acquire a so-called “knowledge” that, through a sum of mental pictures, will lift the soul up out of all further questions and riddles and lead it into possession of a “world view” in which it can rest from all further seeking. The viewpoint of seeing consciousness does not bring cognitive questions to a standstill; on the contrary, it brings them into further movement, and in a certain sense increases them, both in number and in liveliness. But it lifts these questions into a sphere of reality in which they receive that meaning which man’s knowing activity is already seeking *unconsciously* before it has even discovered this meaning. And in this unconscious seeking is created what is unsatisfying about

those standpoints in world views which do not want to grant validity to seeing consciousness. From this unconscious seeking there also arises the view — which thinks itself to be Socratic but in actuality is sophistic — that that knowledge is the highest which knows only *one* truth: that there is no truth.

There are people who worry when they think that man could lose his impulse for progress in knowledge as soon as he believes himself equipped with a solution to the riddles of the world. No one need have this concern with respect either to German idealism or to the viewpoint of seeing consciousness<sup>11</sup>.

There are also other ways for a rightful appreciation of modern idealism in world views to root out the misunderstandings that confront it. Of course, one cannot deny that many adherents of this idealism in world views, through their own misunderstanding of what they believe, have given cause for opposition, just as the adherents of the natural scientific way of picturing things, by overestimating the carrying power of their views for knowledge of reality, have evoked undeserved rejection of their views. The significant Austrian philosopher (and Catholic priest) Laurenz Müllner, in an essay about Adolf Friedrich Graf von Schack, has expressed himself in a forceful manner, from the standpoint of Christianity, on modern natural science's thoughts about evolution. He rejects the assertions of Schack that culminate

in the words: "The objections raised against the theory of evolution all stem from superficiality." And after this repudiation he says: "Positive Christianity has no reason to act negatively toward the idea of evolution as such, if natural processes are not conceived merely as a causal mechanism based from all eternity upon itself, and if man is not presented as a product of such a mechanism." These words came from the same Christian spirit out of which Laurenz Müllner spoke in his significant inaugural address, on Galileo, as president of the Vienna University: "Thus the new world view (he means that of Copernicus and Galileo) often came to appear as antithetical to beliefs declaring themselves, with very dubious justification. to be descendants of Christian teachings, It was much more a matter of the antithesis between the wider world consciousness of a *new age* and the more narrowly limited consciousness of *classical antiquity*; it was a matter of antithesis toward the *Greek* world view and not toward the rightly understood *Christian* world view, which, in the newly discovered world of the stars, could only have seen new wonders of divine wisdom through which the wonders of divine love accomplished on the earth could only attain greater significance." Just as in Müllner we are presented with a Christian thinker's beautiful freedom from bias relative to the natural-scientific way of picturing things, so a similar freedom from bias is certainly possible relative to German idealism in world views. Such a freedom from bias would say: Positive Christianity has no reason to act negatively toward the idea,

as such, of a spiritual experience in the soul, if this spiritual experience does not lead to the death of the religious experience of devotion and moral edification, and if the soul is not deified.

And the other words of Laurenz Müllner, for an unbiased Christian thinker, could take the form: The world view of German idealism often came to appear as antithetical to beliefs declaring themselves, with very dubious justification, to be descendants of Christian teachings. It is far more a matter of the antithesis between a world view that acknowledges the spiritual being of the soul and a world view that can find no access to this spiritual being; it is a matter of antithesis to a misunderstood natural-scientific way of picturing things, and not toward the rightly understood Christian world view, which, in the genuine spiritual experiences of the human soul, could see only the revelations of divine power and wisdom, through which the experiences of religious devotion and moral edification — as well as the powers of human duty sustained by love — could only attain further strength.

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Robert Hamerling felt the impulse toward idealism in world views to be the basic impulse in the being of the German folk spirit (*Volkstum*). The way he presented his search for knowledge in his *Atomism of Will* shows that for his age he is

not thinking of a revival of any ancient Indian stream in world views. But he does think of German idealism as striving — out of the being of his folk spirit, in the way demanded by a new age — toward the spiritual realities that were sought in bygone ages by the strongest soul forces of Asiatic humanity of that time. And he does not think of the cognitive striving of this idealism in world views, with its direction toward spiritual realities, as dimming man's gaze upward into divine heights, but rather as strengthening it; he is filled with this belief because he sees this cognitive striving itself to be merged with the roots of the religious attitude. As Robert Hamerling is writing his German Migration in 1864, he is filled with thoughts about his people's task, which is an expression of this essential characteristic. This poem is like the depiction of a vision. In primeval times, the Germans migrate from Asia into Europe. The Caucasus is a resting place for the wandering people.

The evening sinks away. Like golden landmarks  
In twilight's final gleaming glow the summits  
Of Caucasus, and as from distant worlds  
They look down full of meaning on the groupings  
Of people resting, filling up the valleys  
With all their weapons, steeds, and canopies.

—

From out the glow of sun's self-sacrifice  
At last like phoenix climbs the moon's full disk

And hovers high above the orient's plane.

—

But now the people rest. Yet Teut the youth,  
Of kingly gaze and mien, has stayed awake,  
His blond head deeply sunk in meditation.

—

And then, as from a brief dream wakening, upward  
He turns his eye, a light, a clear one, falls  
Like dew upon him. See! It seems to him  
As though in heights above, the golden globes  
Of heaven joined their shining rays together  
Into a shimmering pair of starry eyes:  
As though towards him a marvel,  
A mild and earnest countenance inclined,  
As though, before his proud and sun-like flights,  
With noble features, primal mother Asia  
Did eye to eye to her brave son appear.

And primal mother Asia reveals to Teut his people's future;  
she does not speak only hymns of praise; she speaks  
earnestly about the people's shadow and light aspects. But  
she also speaks about that essential trait of the people that  
shows cognitive striving to be in complete unity with an  
upward gaze to the divine:

Your joy in dreams, divine inebriation,  
Your ancient Asian homeland's blessed warmth



And heartiness will go on living in you.  
Of peaceful permanence,  
This holy ray will be a temple fire  
Of mankind, free of smoke — with purest flame  
Will glow on in your breast and will remain  
Your soul nurse and the pilot at your helm!  
Because you love, you strive: your boldest thinking  
Will be the zeal to sink itself in God.

The introduction of these words of Robert Hamerling is not meant to indicate that the idealism in world views characterized in this book nor the view put forward by the viewpoint of seeing consciousness could in any way vie with the religious world view, let alone supersede it. Both would misunderstand themselves entirely if they wished to create religions or sects, or wished to impinge upon anyone's religious beliefs.

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Notes:

1. Please see note on p. 164
2. What one now calls the “theory of relativity” must orient itself according to mental pictures of this sort; otherwise it does not escape from logical theories into ideas that are in *accordance with reality* in the sense that this concept of “*accordance with reality*” has been characterized in this book

in describing Planck's views.

3. What you behold in this way is self-explanatory; i.e., seeing it and understanding ("judging") it are synonymous. What you "see" is pure, self-evident meaning. – Ed.

4. Page 55ff., Rudolf Steiner's *Goethean Science*, Mercury Press, 1988. – Ed.

5. Someone whose concern is for a real knowledge of the spiritual world is very happy when a gifted artist like Hermann Bahr, in his brilliant comedy "The Master," portrays the comedies of life that often attach themselves so insistently to endeavors seeking a science of the spirit.

6. *Hingabe*: literally "a giving oneself over to" something. – Ed.

7. Please see p. 167.

8. What is meant here should not be confused with the attitude of soul underlying ancient Indian striving for knowledge, as will be indicated in what follows. See page 72 above.

9. *Freiheit*. Please see footnote to page 35. – Ed.

10. Published in English as *Goethean Science* (1988) and

*Goethe's World View* (1985) by the Mercury Press. – Ed.

11. Please see note on p. 166.

## Notes

### Note from page 48:

Otto Willmann has written an excellent book dealing with *The History of Idealism*. With a far-reaching knowledge of his field, he points out the weaknesses and one-sidednesses that have come into the evolution of world views in the nineteenth century through the continuing effects of the Kantian formulation of questions and direction in thought. The depictions I gave in this present book sought within the life of the world views of the nineteenth century to find those impulses and streams through which thinkers have freed themselves from Kant's formulation of questions and direction in thought, and through which they have taken paths to which precisely they could do justice who judge the matter according to just such a far-reaching view as that underlying Willmann's book. Many views that wish to attach themselves to Kant in modern times, without sufficient insight into the preceding evolution of world views, revert in fact to views characterized correctly in the following words by Willmann to the effect "that according to Aristotle our knowledge begins with the things of the world and on the basis of sense perceptions only then forms the concept ... that this forming of concepts occurs through a creative act, in which the human spirit grasps the thought-element within the things ... One still always has to indicate to certain sense-bound and banal people that perceiving can never enhance itself to the point of being able

to think, that sensations and feelings cannot bunch together into concepts, and that, on the contrary, perceiving and sensing must themselves be constituted by something, and constituted, in fact, on the basis of the thoughts existing in the things; ... only thoughts can grant us any necessitated and universal knowledge.” Someone who thinks in this way — if he frees himself from certain misapprehensions holding sway, understandably, among the adherents of Willmann’s kind of thinking — can speak with comprehension and appreciation, even from Willmann’s standpoint, of Schelling’s and Hegel’s direction in thought and of much that, like them, runs away from “sense-bound banality.” A time will also come when Willmann’s kind of thinking will be judged with less bias in this direction than is now the case. This kind of thinking will then be just as correct in its appreciation of what, in the evolution of modern world views, has broken free of “sense-bound banality” as it is correct now in condemning views that have fallen prey to this and many other “banalities.”

**Note from page 129:**

If someone wanted to object that this presentation does not reckon with the findings of physiology relative to the senses, he would only show that he has not correctly estimated the implications of this presentation. Such a person could say: Out of the dark and silent world, configurations arise that continuously diversify and finally become organs through

whose function the “dark ether waves,” for example, are transformed into light. But nothing is said by this that has not already been dealt with in our presentation. In the picture of the “dark world” the eye is also depicted; but through no eye can that be *thought* of as perceptible *which through its own nature must be thought of as imperceptible*.

One might also assert that our presentation does not reckon with the fact that the modern natural-scientific world picture no longer stands on the same ground as Du Bois-Reymond, for example, stood. One no longer expects as much as he and his scientific contemporaries did from a “mechanics of atoms,” from a “tracing back” of “all natural phenomena to the movements of the smallest particles of matter,” etc. These older theories are overcome by the views of E. Mach, by the physicist Max Planck and by others. Nevertheless, what has been said in this book also applies to these most recent views. That Mach, for example, wishes to build up the field of natural science upon sensation (*Sinnesempfindung*) compels him, in fact, to take up into his world picture only that element of nature which by its very being can never be thought of as perceivable. He does indeed take his start from sensation, but cannot return to it again, through his presentations, in a way that accords with reality. When Mach speaks of sensation, he is pointing to what is sensed; but, in thinking the object of sensation, he must separate it from the “I”. He does not notice now that in so

doing he is thinking something that can no longer be sensed. He shows this through the fact that in his world of sensation the “I” concept flutters away entirely. For Mach, the “I” becomes a mythical concept. He loses the “I”. Because — in spite of the fact that he is not conscious of this — he is unconsciously *compelled*, after all, to think of his world of sensation as incapable of being sensed, his world of sensation casts out of itself that which does the sensing: the “I.” In this way Mach’s view is precisely a proof of what has been presented here. And the views of Max Planck, the theoretical physicist, are the best example of the correctness of the above presentation. One can say, in fact, that the most recent thoughts about mechanics and electrodynamics are moving even more in the direction we have described here as necessary: out of the world of perception to sketch a picture of a world that is not perceivable.

### **Note from page 158:**

In judging questions relative to world views, many people are particularly confused by their predilection for words they believe are thoughts but actually are only vague, soothing reflections. Much is gained when one is not unclear about the fact that words are like gestures that can merely point to their object, but whose actual content has nothing to do with the thought itself. (Just as little as the word “table” has to do with a real table.) A little book that has just appeared, *Cultural*

*Superstition* by Alexander von Gleichen-Russwurm, speaks quite forcibly about this phenomenon in many areas. — Whoever grants validity to the viewpoint of seeing consciousness will find it particularly necessary to acknowledge fully what the natural-scientific way of picturing things also has to say about human soul phenomena. The prominent Viennese anthropologist Moritz Benedict has written (1894) a *Psychology* (*Seelenkunde*) — which from a certain viewpoint is outstanding — based on the natural-scientific way of picturing things. Because of the author's healthy sense for reality in judging human soul life, one can regard this *Psychology* in many ways as a positively classic work. And one can hold this view even if one must say to oneself that the viewpoint of seeing consciousness we have characterized in this book would be rejected quite decisively by the author of this *Psychology*. Those who think like this natural scientist, however, will not always have to maintain this rejection.